



The Cross of Rivaulx! Is that a name familiar to my readers? I rather think not. Listen then: it is a green, delightful, and quiet place half way between Angria and the foot of the Sydenham Hills; under the frown of Hawkscliffe, on the edge of its royal forest. You see a fair house, whose sash windows are set in ivy grown thick and kept in trim order; over the front door there is a little modern porch of trellis work, all the summer covered with a succession of verdant leaves and pink rose-globes, buds and full-blown blossoms. Within this, in fine weather, the door is constantly open and reveals a noble passage, almost a hall, terminating in a staircase of low white steps, traced up the middle by a brilliant carpet. You look in vain for anything like a wall or gate to shut it in: the only landmark consists in an old obelisk with moss and wild flowers at its base and an half obliterated crucifix sculptured on its side.

Well, this is no very presuming place, but on a June evening not seldom have I seen a figure, whom every eye in Angria might recognise, stride out of the domestic gloom of that little hall and stand in pleasant leisure under the porch whose flowers and leaves were disturbed by the contact of his curls. Though in a sequestered spot, the Cross of Rivaulx is not one of Zamorna's secret houses; he'll let anybody come there that chooses.

The day is breathless, quite still and warm. The sun, far declined for afternoon, is just melting into evening, and sheds a deep amber light. A cheerful air surrounds the mansion whose windows are up, its door as usual hospitably apart, and the broad passage reverberates with a lively conversational hum from the rooms which open into it. The day is of that perfectly mild, sunny kind that by an irresistible influence draws people out into the balmy air; see, there are two gentlemen lounging easily in the porch, sipping coffee from the cups they have brought from the drawing room; a third has stretched himself on the soft moss in the shadow of the obelisk. But for these figures, the landscape could be one of exquisite repose.

Two, [in military dress], are officers from the headquarters of Zamorna's grand army; the other, reclining on the grass, a slight figure in black, wears a civil dress. That is Mr Warner, the home secretary. Another person was standing by him whom I should not have omitted to describe. It was a fine girl, dressed in rich black satin, with ornaments like those of a bandit's wife in which a whole fortune seemed to have been expended; but no wonder, for they had doubtless been the gift of a king. In her ears hung two long clear drops, red as fire, and suffused with a purple tint that showed them to be the true oriental ruby. Bright delicate links of gold circled her neck again and again, and a cross of gems lay on her breast, the centre stone of which was a locket enclosing a ringlet of dark brown hair — with that little soft curl she would not have parted for a kingdom.

Warner's eyes were fixed with interest on Miss Laury as she stood over him, a model of beautiful vigour and glowing health; there was a kind of military erectness in her form, so elegantly built, and in the manner in which her neck, sprung from her exquisite bust, was placed with graceful uprightness on her falling shoulders. Her waits too, falling in behind, and her fine slender foot, supporting her in a regulated position, plainly indicated familiarity from her childhood with the sergeant's drill. All the afternoon she had been entertaining her exalted guests — the two in the porch were no other than Lord Hartford and Enara — and conversing with them, frankly and cheerfully. These were the only friends she had in the world. Female acquaintance she never sought, nor if she had sought, would she have found them. And so sagacious, clever, and earnest was she in all she said and did, that the haughty aristocrats did not hesitate to communicate with her often on matters of first-rate importance.

Mr Warner was now talking to her about herself.

'My dear madam,' he was saying in his usual imperious and still dulcet tone, 'it is unreasonable that you should remain thus exposed to danger. I am your friend — yes, madam, your true friend. Why do you not hear me and attend to my representations of the case? Angria is an unsafe place for you. You ought to leave it.' The lady shook her head.

'Never. Till my master compels me, his land is my land.'

'But — but, Miss Laury, you know that our army have no warrant from the Almighty. This invasion may be successful at least for a time; and then what becomes of you? When the duke's nation is wrestling with destruction, his glory sunk in deep waters, and himself striving desperately to recover it, can he waste a thought or a moment on one woman?'

Mina smiled.

'I am resolved,' said she. 'My master himself shall not force me to leave him. You know I am hardened, Warner; shame and reproach have no effect on me. I do not care for being called a camp follower. In peace and pleasure all the ladies of Africa would be at the duke's beck; in war and suffering he shall not lack one poor peasant girl. Why, sir, I've nothing else to exist for. I've no other interest in life. Just to stand by his grace, watch him and anticipate his wishes, or when I cannot do that, to execute them like lightning when they are signified; to wait on him when he is sick or wounded, to hear his groans and bear his heartrending animal patience in enduring pain; to breathe if I can my own inexhaustible health and energy into him, and oh, if it were practicable, to take his fever and agony; to guard his interests, to take on my shoulders power from him that galls me with its weight; to fill a gap in his mighty train of service which nobody else would dare to step into: to do all that, sir, is to fulfil the destiny I was born to. I know I am of no repute amongst society at large because I have devoted myself so wholly to one man. And I know that he even seldom troubles himself to think of what I do, has never and can never appreciate the unusual feelings of subservience, the total self-sacrifice I offer at his shrine. But then he gives me my reward, and that an abundant one.'

'Mr Warner, when I was at Fort Adrian and had all the yoke of governing the garrison and military household, I used to rejoice in my responsibility, and to feel firmer, the heavier the weight assigned me to support. When my master came over, as he often did to take one of his general surveys, or on a hunting expedition with some of his state officers, I had such delight in ordering the banquets and entertainments, and in seeing the fires kindled up and the chandeliers lighted in those dark halls, knowing for whom the feast was made ready. It gave me a feeling of ecstasy to hear my young master's voice, to see him moving about secure and powerful in his own

stronghold, to know what true hearts he had about him. Besides, sir, his greeting to me, and the condescending touch of his hand, were enough to make a queen proud, let alone a sergeant's daughter.

'Then, for instance, the last summer evening that he came here, the sun and flowers and quietness brightened his noble features with such happiness, I could tell his heart was at rest; for as he lay in the shade where you are now, I heard him hum the airs he long, long ago played on his guitar. I was rewarded then to feel that the house I kept was pleasant enough to make him forget Angria and recur to home. You must excuse me, Mr Warner, but the west, the sweet west, is both his home and mine.' Mina paused and looked solemnly at the sun, now softened in its shine and hanging exceedingly low. In a moment her eyes fell again on Warner. They seemed to have absorbed radiance from what they had gazed on: light like an arrow point glanced in them as she said,

'This is my time to follow Zamorna. I'll not be robbed of those hours of blissful danger when I may be continually with him. I am not afraid of danger; I have strong nerves; I will die or be with him.'

'What has fired your eyes so suddenly, Miss Laury?' asked Lord Hartford, now advancing with Enara from their canopy of roses.

'The duke, the duke,' muttered Enara. 'You won't leave him, I'll be sworn.'

'I can't, general,' said Mina.

'No,' answered the Italian, 'and nobody shall force you. You shall have your own way, madam, whether it be right or wrong. I hate to contradict such as you in their will.'

'Thank you, general, you are always so kind to me.' Mina hurriedly put her little hand into the gloved grasp of Enara.

'Kind, madam?' said he, pressing it warmly, 'I'm so kind that I would hang the man unshriven who should use your name with other than respect due to a queen.' The dark, hard-browed Hartford smiled at his enthusiasm.

'Is that homage paid to Miss Laury's goodness or to her beauty?' asked he.

'To neither, my lord,' answered Enara briefly, 'but to her worth, her sterling worth.'

'Hartford, you are not going to despise me? Was that a sneer?' murmured Mina aside.

'No. No, Miss Laury,' replied the noble general seriously. 'I know what you are; I am aware of your value. Do you doubt Edward Hartford's honourable friendship? It is yours on terms such as it was never given to a beautiful woman before.'

Before Miss Laury could answer, a voice from within the mansion spoke her name.

'It is my lord!' she exclaimed, and sped like a roe over the sward, through the porch, along the passage, to a summer parlour, whose walls were painted fine pale red, its mouldings burnished gilding, and its window curtains artistical draperies of dark blue silk, covered with gold waves and flowers.

Here Zamorna sat alone; he had been writing. One or two letters, folded, sealed, and inscribed with western directions lay on the table beside him. He had not uncovered since entering the house three hours since, and either the weight of his dragoon helmet, or the gloom of its impending plumes, or else some inward feeling, had clouded his face with a strange darkness.

Mina closed the door and softly drew near; without speaking or asking leave, she began to busy herself in unclasping the heavy helmet. The duke smiled faintly as her little fingers played about his chin and luxuriant whiskers; and then, the load of brass and sable plumage being removed, as they arranged the compressed masses of glossy brown ringlets, and touched with soft cool contact his feverish brow. Absorbed in this grateful task she hardly felt that his majesty's arm had encircled her waist; yet she did feel it, too, and would have thought herself presumptuous to shrink from his endearment. She took it as a slave ought to take the caress of a sultan, and obeying the gentle effort of his hand, slowly sunk on to the sofa by her master's side.

'My little physician,' said he, meeting her adoring but anxious upward gaze with the full light of his countenance, 'you look at me as if you thought I was not well — feel my pulse.' She folded the proffered hand, white, supple, and soft with youth and delicate nurture, in both her own; whether Zamorna's pulse beat rapidly or not, his handmaid's did as she felt the slender grasping fingers of the monarch laid quietly in hers.

He did not wait for the report, but took his hand away again, and laying it on her raven curls said, 'So, Mina, you won't leave me, though I never did you any good in the world. Warner says you are resolved to continue in the scene of war.'

'To continue by your side, my lord duke.'

'But what shall I do with you, Mina? Where shall I put you? My little girl, what will the army say when they hear of your presence? You have read history; recollect that it was Darius who carried his concubines to the field, not Alexander. The world will say Zamorna has provided himself with a pretty mistress. He attends to his own pleasures and cares not how his men suffer.'

Poor Mina writhed at these words as if the iron had entered into her soul. A vivid burning blush crimsoned her cheek, and tears of shame and bitter self-reproach gushed at once into her bright black eyes. Zamorna was touched acutely.

'Nay, my little girl,' said he, redoubling his haughty caresses and speaking in his most soothing tone, 'never weep about it. It grieves me to hurt your feelings, but you desire an impossibility and I must use strong language to convince you that I cannot grant it —'

'Oh! don't refuse me again,' sobbed Miss Laury. 'I'll bear all infamy and contempt to be allowed to follow you, my lord. My lord, I've served you for many years most faithfully and I seldom ask a favour of you. Don't reject almost the first request of the kind I ever made.' The duke shook his head, and the meeting of his exquisite lips, too placid for the term compression, told he was not to be moved.

'If you should receive a wound, if you should fall sick,' continued Mina, 'what can surgeons and physicians do for you? They cannot watch you and wait on you and worship you like me; you do not seem well now, the bloom is so faded on your complexion and the flesh is wasted round your eyes. My lord, smile and do not look so calmly resolved. Let me go!'

Zamorna withdrew his arm from her waist. 'I must be displeased before you cease to importune me,' said he. 'Mina, look at that letter, read the direction,' pointing to one he had been writing. She obeyed: it was addressed to Her Royal Highness Mary Henrietta, Duchess of Zamorna, Queen of Angria.

'Must I pay no attention to the feelings of that lady?' pursued the duke, whom the duties of war and the conflict of some internal emotions seemed to render rather peculiarly stern. 'Her public claims must be respected whether I love her or not.' Miss Laury shrunk into herself. Not another word did she venture to breathe. An unconscious wish of wild intensity filled her that she were dead and

buried, insensible to the shame that overwhelmed her. She saw Zamorna's finger with the ring on it still pointing to that awful name, a name that raised no impulse of hatred, but only bitter humiliation and self-abasement. She stole from her master's side, feeling that she had no more right to sit there than a fawn has to share the den of a royal lion; and murmuring that she was very sorry for her folly, was about to glide in dismay and despair from the room. But the duke, rising up, arrested her, and bending his lofty stature over as she crouched before him, folded her again in his arms. His countenance relaxed not a moment from its sternness, nor did the gloom leave his magnificent but worn features, as he said,

'I will make no apologies for what I have said because I know, Mina, that, as I hold you now, you feel fully recompensed for my transient severity. Before I depart, I will speak to you one word of comfort, which you may remember when I am far away, and perhaps dead. My dear girl! I know and appreciate all you have done, all you have resigned, and all you have endured for my sake. I repay you for it with one coin, with what alone will be to you of greater worth than worlds without it. I give you such true and fond love as a master may give to the fairest and loveliest vassal that ever was bound to him in feudal allegiance. You may never feel the touch of Zamorna's lips again. There, Mina.' And fervently, almost fiercely, he pressed them to her forehead. 'Go to your chamber. Tomorrow you must leave for the west.'

'Obedient till death,' was Miss Laury's answer, as she closed the door and disappeared.

[Meanwhile ... though Zamorna has apparently directed a letter to his wife in this past scene, he persists in his decision to repudiate her and get revenge on her father, Northangerland, by breaking her heart. Weeks pass without a word from Zamorna, and Mary begins to pine away.]

The duchess dropped her head on her hand.

'Is the sun shining hot this evening?' said she. 'I feel very languid and inert.' Alas, it was not the mild sun of April glistening even now on the lingering rain drops of the morning which caused that sickly languor. 'I wish the mail would come in,' continued the duchess. 'How long is it since I've had a letter now, Amelia?'

'Three weeks, my lady.'

'If none comes this evening, what shall I do, Amelia? I shall never get on till tomorrow. Oh, I dread those long, weary, sleepless nights I've had lately, tossing through many hours on a wide, lonely bed, with the lamps decaying round me. Now I think I could sleep if I only had a kind letter for a talisman to press to my heart all night long. Amelia, I'd give anything to get from the east this evening a square of white paper directed in that light, rapid hand. Would he but write two lines to me signed with his name.'

'My lady,' said Miss Clifton, as she placed a little silver vessel of tea and a plate of biscuit before her mistress, 'you will hear from the east this evening, and that before many minutes elapse. Mr Warner is in Verdopolis and will wait upon you immediately.' It was pleasant to see how a sudden beam of joy shot into the settled sadness of Queen Mary's face.

'I am thankful to heaven for it,' exclaimed she. 'Even if he brings bad news it will be a relief from suspense; and if good news, this heart sickness will be removed for a moment.'

As she spoke, a foot was heard in the antechamber, there was a light tap at the door. Mr Warner entered closely muffled, as it was absolutely necessary that he should avoid remark, for the sacrifice of his liberty would have been the result of recognition. With something of chivalric devotedness in his manner he sunk on one knee before the duchess, and respectfully touched with his lips the hand she offered him. A gleam of eager anxiety darted into his eyes as he rose, looked at her, and saw the pining and joyless shadow which had settled on her divine features, her blanched delicacy of complexion.

'Your grace is wasting away,' said he abruptly, the first greeting being past. 'You are going into a decline; you have imagined things to be worse than they really are; you have frightened yourself with fantastic surmises.'

[Despite his desire to console her, Warner does not bring the longed-for letter. In desperation, Mary resolved to return with him to the front.]

'I cannot try one effort to soften him, separated by one hundred and twenty miles. He would think of me more as a woman, I am sure, and less as a bodiless link between himself and my terrible father if I were near at hand. Warner, this irritation throughout all my nerves is unbearable. I am not accustomed to disappointment and delay in what I wish. When do you return to Angria?'

'Tomorrow, my lady, before daylight, if possible.' 'And you travel incognito, of course?'

'I do.'

'Make room in your carriage then for me. I must go with you. Not a word, I implore you, Mr Warner, of expostulation. I should have died before morning if I had not hit upon this expedient.' Mr Warner heard her in silence and saw it was utterly vain to oppose her, but in his heart he hated the adventure. He saw its rashness and peril; besides he had calculated the result of the duke's determination over and over again. He had weighed advantages against disadvantages, profit against loss, the separation from the father against the happiness of the daughter, and in his serene and ambitious eye, the latter scale seemed far to kick the beam. He bowed to the duchess, said she should be obeyed, and left the room.

[Upon their arrival at the front Warner immediately meets with Zamorna.]

'I knew you were come, Howard,' said he, 'for I heard your voice below a quarter of an hour since. Well, have you procured the documents?'

'Yes, and I have delivered them to your grace's private secretary.'

'They were at Wellesley house, of course?'

'Yes, in the duchess's own keeping. She said you wished them to be preserved with care.'

'Her grace,' continued Warner after a brief pause, 'asked very anxiously after you.'

The stern field-marshal look came over the duke, as he lay giantlike on his couch, and the momentary mildness melted away.

'I need not ask you how Mary Wellesley looks,' said he in his deep undertone, 'because I know better than you can tell me. I say, Howard, did she not ask you for a letter?'

'She did; she almost entreated me for one.'

'And you had not one to give her,' answered his sovereign, while with a low bitter laugh he turned on his couch and was silent.

Warner paced the room with a troubled step. 'My lord, are you doing right?' exclaimed he, pausing suddenly. 'The matter lies between God and your conscience. I know that the kingdom must be saved at any hazard of individual peace or even life; I advocate expediency, my lord, in the government of a state; I allow of equivocal measures to procure a just end; I sanction the shedding of blood and the cutting up of domestic happiness by the roots to stab a traitor to the heart. But nevertheless I am a man, sire, and after what I have seen during the last day or two, I ask your majesty with solemn earnestness: is there no way by which the heart of Northangerland may be reached except through the breast of my queen?'

[Zamorna remains obdurate, and Warner finally quits him, with the intelligence that there is 'a lady' in the next room who wishes an audience with him.]

About ten minutes after Warner's departure, the lady in question entered the room by an inner door. Zamorna was now risen from his couch and stood in full stature before the fire. He turned to her at first carelessly, but his keen eye was quickly lit up with interest when he saw the elegant figure, whose slight, youthful proportions and graceful carriage, agreeing with her dress, produced an effect of such ladylike harmony. While dropping a profound obeisance, she contrived so to arrange her large veil as to hide her face. As she did this, her hand trembled; then she paused and leaned against a bookcase near the door.

Zamorna now saw that she shook from head to foot. Speaking in his tone of most soothing melody, he told her to draw near, and placed a chair for her close by the hearth. She made an effort to obey but it was evident she would have dropped if she had quitted her support. His grace smiled, a little surprised at her extreme agitation.

'I hope, madam,' said he, 'my presence is not the cause of your alarm,' and advancing, he kindly gave her his hand and led her to a seat. As she grew a little calmer he addressed her again in tones of the softest encouragement.

'I think Mr Warner said you are the wife of an officer in my army. What is his name?'

'Archer,' replied the lady, dropping one silver word for the first time.

'And have you any request to make concerning your husband? Speak our freely, madam; if it be reasonable, I will grant it.' She made some answer, but in a tone too low to be audible.

'Be so kind as to remove your veil, madam,' said the duke. 'It prevents me from hearing what you say distinctly.' She hesitated a moment, then as if she had formed some sudden resolution, she loosened the satin knot that confined her bonnet, and taking off both it and her veil, let them drop on the carpet. His majesty now caught a glimpse of a beautiful blushing face, but in a moment clusters of curls fell over it, and it was likewise concealed by two delicate little white hands with many rings sparkling on the taper fingers.

The sovereign of the east was nonplussed; he had an acute eye for most of these matters, but he did not quite understand the growing, trembling embarrassment of his lovely suppliant. He repeated the question he had before put to the lady respecting the nature of her petition.

'Sire,' said she at length, 'I want your majesty's gracious permission to see my dear, dear husband once more in this world before he leaves me forever.' She looked up, parted from her fair forehead her auburn curls, and raised her wild brown eyes, tearful and earnest and imploring, to a face that grew crimson under their glance.

The king's heart beat and throbbed till its motion could be seen in the heaving of a splendid chest. He seemed fixed in his attitude, standing before the lady, slightly bent over her, an inexpressible sparkle commencing and spreading to a flash in his eyes, the current of his lifeblood rising to his cheek, and his forehead dark with solemn, awful, desperate thought.

Mary clasped her hands and waited. She did not know whether love or indignation would prevail. She saw that both feelings were at work. Her suspense was at an end: the thundercloud broke asunder in a burst of electric passion! He turned from his duchess and flung open the door. A voice rung along the halls of Angria House summoning Warner — a voice having the spirit of a trumpet, the depth of a drum in its tone —

[Warner is duly rebuked in true imperial style, and dismissed.]

Warner, whose angelic philosophy had been little shaken by this appalling hurricane, would have stopped to give his grace a brief homily on the wickedness of indulging in violent passions; but a glance of entreaty from the duchess prevailed on him to withdraw in silence.

It was with a sensation of pleasurable terror that Mary found herself again alone with the duke. He had not yet spoken one harsh word to her. It was awful to be Zamorna's sole companion in this hour of his ire but how much better than to be one hundred and twenty miles away from him. She was soon near enough. The duke, gazing at her pale and sweet loveliness till he felt there was nothing in the world he loved half so well — -conscious that her delicate attenuation was for his sake, appreciating too the idolatry that had brought her through such perils to see him at all hazards — threw himself impetuously beside her and soon made her tremble as much with the ardour of his caresses as she had done with the dread of his wrath.

'I'll seize the few hours of happiness you have thrown in my way, Mary,' said he, as she clung to him and called him her adored glorious Adrian, 'but these kisses and tears of thine, and this intoxicating beauty, shall not change my resolution. I will rend you, my lovely rose, entirely from me; I'll plant you in your father's garden again: I must do it, he compels me.'

'I don't care,' said the duchess, swallowing the delicious draught of the moment, and turning from the dark future to the glorious present shrined in Zamorna. 'But if you do divorce me, Zamorna, will you never, never take me back to you? Must I die inevitably before I am twenty?' The duke looked at her in silence; he could not cut off hope.

'The event has not taken place yet, Mary, and there lingers a possibility that it may be averted. But, love, should I take the crown off that sweet brow, the crown I placed over those silken curls on the day of our coronation, do not live hopeless. You may on some moonlight night hear Adrian's whistle under your window when you least expect it. Then step out on to the parapet; I'll lift you in my arms from thence to the terrace. From that time for ever, Mary, though Angria shall have no queen, a Percy shall have no daughter.'

'Adrian,' said the duchess, 'how different you are, how very different when I get close to you. At a distance you appear quite unapproachable. I wish, I wish my father was as near to you now as I am — or at least almost as near; because I am your creeping plant, I twine about you like ivy, and he is a tree to grow side by side with you. If he were in this room I should be satisfied.'

What answer Zamorna made I know not, but he brought down the curtain.

[An interval ensues; Zamorna is ultimately victorious and the rebellion put down; he is reconciled with Northangerland, against the vigorous objections of his advisors, and Mary is saved from the death which could surely have followed a permanent separation from her 'Adrian'. However, we next see Zamorna trying to extricate himself once again from his tenacious 'creeping plant'. He has bid good-bye to his family and is about to set off for Angria.]

The barouche stood at the door, the groom and the valet were waiting, and the duke, with a clouded countenance, was proceeding to join them, when his wife came forwards.

'You have forgotten me, Adrian — ' she said in a very quiet tone, but her eye meantime flashed expressively. He started, for in truth he had forgotten her.

'Good-bye then, Mary,' he said, giving her a hurried kiss and embrace. She detained his hand.

'Pray, how long am I to stay here?' she asked. 'Why do you leave me at all? Why am I not to go with you?' 'It is such weather,' he answered. 'When this storm passes over I will send for you — '

'When will that be?' pursued the duchess, following his steps as he strode into the hall.

'Soon — soon my love — perhaps in a day or two — there now — don't be unreasonable — of course you cannot go today — '

'I can and I will,' answered the duchess quickly. 'I have had enough of Alnwick, you shall not leave me behind you.'

'Go into the room, Mary. The door is open and the wind blows on you far too keenly. Don't you see how it drifts the snow in — '

'I will not go into the room. I'll step into the carriage as I am. If you refuse to wait till I can prepare, perhaps you will be humane enough to let me have a share of your cloak — ' She shivered as she spoke. Her hair and her dress floated in the cold blast that blew in through the open entrance, strewing the hall with snow and dead leaves.

'You might wait till it is milder. I don't think it will do your grace any good to be out today — '

'But I must go, Mary — The Christmas recess is over and business presses.'

'Then do take me; I am sure I can bear it.'

'Out of the question. You may well clasp those small, silly hands — so thin I can almost see through them; and you may shake your curls over your face — to hide its paleness from me, I suppose. What is the matter? Crying? Good! What the devil am I to do with her? Go to your father, Mary. He has spoilt you.' 'Adrian, I cannot live at Alnwick without you,' said the duchess earnestly, 'It recalls too forcibly the very bitterest days of my life. I'll not be separated from you again except by violence — '

The task of persuasion was no very easy one, for his own false play, his alienations, and his unnumbered treacheries had filled her mind with hideous phantoms of jealousy, had weakened her nerves and made them a prey to a hundred vague apprehensions; fears that never wholly left her except when she was actually in his arms or at least in his immediate presence.

'I tell you, Mary,' he said, regarding her with a smile half expressive of fondness — half of vexation — 'I tell you I will send for you in two or three days — . Probably I shall be a week in Angria, not more — '

'A week! and your grace considers that but a short time? To me it will be most wearisome — '

'The horses will be frozen if they stand much longer,' returned the duke, not heeding her last remark. 'Come, wipe your eyes and be a little philosopher for once. There, let me have one smile before I go. A week will be over directly — this is not like setting out for a campaign.'

'Don't forget to send for me in two days,' pleaded the duchess as Zamorna released her from his arms.

'No, no, I'll send for you tomorrow — if the weather is settled enough. And,' half mimicking her voice, 'don't be jealous of me, Mary — unless you're afraid of the superior charms of Enara and Warner. Good-bye — ' He was gone. She hurried to the window; he passed it. In three minutes the barouche swept with muffled sound round the lawn, shot down the carriage road, and was quickly lost in the thickening whirl of the snow storm.

[Mina, in the meantime, waits patiently for Zamorna at Rivaulx. As it happens, Lord Hartford is desperately in love with Mina; outraged by Zamorna's careless treatment of her, he decides to visit her and propose. He makes several attempts to broach the subject, but Mina pointedly avoids taking his meaning. Finally, however, his ardour becomes unmistakeable.]

Miss Laury agitatedly rose; she approached Hartford.

'My lord, you have been very kind to me, and I feel very grateful for that kindness. Perhaps sometime I may be able to repay it — we know not how the chances of fortune may turn; the weak have aided the strong. I will watch vigilantly for the slightest opportunity to serve you, but do not talk in this way. I scarcely know whither your words tend.' Lord Hartford paused a moment before he replied. Gazing at her with bended brows and folded arms, he said,

'Miss Laury, what do you think of me?'

'That you are one of the noblest hearts in the world,' she replied unhesitatingly. She was standing just before Hartford, looking up at him, her hair falling back from her brow, shading with exquisite curls her temples and her slender neck. Her small sweet features, with that high seriousness deepening their beauty, were lit up by eyes so large, so dark, so swimming, so full of pleading benignity: an

expression of alarmed regard, as if she at once feared for, and pitied, the sinful abstraction of a great mind.

Hartford could not stand it. He could have borne female anger or terror, but the look of enthusiastic gratitude, softened by compassion, nearly unmanned him. He turned his head for a moment aside, but then passion prevailed. Her beauty when he looked again struck through him a maddening sensation, whetted to acute power by a feeling like despair.

'You shall love me!' he exclaimed desperately. 'Do I not love you? Would I not die for you? Must I in return receive only the cold regard of friendship? I am no platonist, Miss Laury — I am not your friend. I am, hear me, madam, your declared lover. Nay, you shall not leave me, by heaven! I am stronger than you are —' She had stepped a pace or two back, appalled by his vehemence. He thought she meant to withdraw; determined not to be so balked, he clasped her at once in both his arms and kissed her furiously rather than fondly. Miss Laury did not struggle.

'Hartford,' said she, steadying her voice, though it faltered in spite of her effort, 'this must be our parting scene. I will never see you again if you do not restrain yourself.' Hartford saw that she turned pale and he felt her tremble violently. His arms relaxed their hold. He allowed her to leave him. She sat down on a chair opposite and hurriedly wiped her brow, which was damp and marble-pale.

'Now, Miss Laury,' said his lordship, 'no man in the world loves you as I do. Will you accept my title and my coronet? I fling them at your feet.'

'My lord, do you know whose I am?' she replied in a hollow, very suppressed tone. 'Do you know with what a sound those proposals fall on my ear, how impious and blasphemous they seem to be? Do you at all conceive how utterly impossible it is that I should ever love you? I thought you a true-hearted faithful man; I find that you are a traitor.'

'And do you despise me?' asked Hartford.

'No, my lord, I do not.' She paused and looked down. The colour rose rapidly into her pale face; she sobbed, not in tears, but in the overmastering approach of an impulse born of a warm heart. Again she looked up. Her eyes had changed, their aspect burning with a wild bright inspiration.

'Hartford,' said she, 'had I met you long since, before I left home and dishonoured my father, I would have loved you. O, my lord, you know not how truly. I would have married you and made it the glory of my life to cheer and brighten your hearth. But I cannot do so now — never.'

'I saw my present master when he had scarcely attained manhood. Do you think, Hartford, I will tell you what feelings I had for him? No tongue could express them: they were so fervid, so glowing in their colour, that they effaced everything else. I lost the power of properly appreciating the value of the world's opinion, of discerning the difference between right and wrong. I have never in my life contradicted Zamorna, never delayed obedience to his commands. I could not! He was sometimes more to me than a human being, he superseded all things: all affections, all interests, all fears or hopes or principles. Unconnected with him, my mind would be a blank — cold, dead, susceptible only of a sense of despair. How I should sicken if I were torn from him and thrown to you! Do not ask it — I would die first. No woman that ever loved my master could consent to leave him. There is nothing like him elsewhere. Hartford, if I were to be your wife, if Zamorna only looked at me, I should creep back like a slave to my former service. I should disgrace you as I have long since disgraced all my kindred. Think of that, my lord, and never say you love me again —'

[Hartford, stung to recklessness, finally insults Mina by a sarcastic reference to her as Zamorna's 'gentle mistress' whom he visits when he is tired by 'the turmoil of business and the teasing of matrimony'. They part abruptly, in bitterness.]

More desperate than ever, Hartford challenges Zamorna to a duel; furious that 'a coarse Angrian squire' should seek to 'possess anything that had ever been mine', the duke inflicts a near-fatal wound on his rival.

Having dismissed Hartford, and unaware of the ensuing duel, Mina returns to her daily tasks, and to waiting for the duke. Mary, less patent than Mina, can wait no longer, and sets out for Zamorna's country house. An accident with her carriage lands her instead at Mina's Cross of Rivaulx, which is on the grounds of the duke's estate.]

Miss Laury was sitting after breakfast in a small library. Her desk lay before her, and two large ruled quartos filled with items and figures which she seemed to be comparing. Behind her chair stood a tall, well-made, soldierly, young man with light hair. His dress was plain and gentlemanly; the epaulette on one shoulder alone indicated an official capacity. He watched with a fixed look of attention the movements of the small fingers, which ascended in rapid calculation of long columns of accounts. It was strange to see the absorption of mind expressed in Miss Laury's face; the gravity of her smooth, white brow, shaded with drooping curls; the scarcely perceptible and unsmiling movement of her lips — though those lips in their rosy sweetness seemed formed only for smiles. An hour or more lapsed in the employment, the room meantime continuing in profound silence broken only by an occasional observation addressed by Miss Laury to the gentleman behind her concerning the legitimacy of some items, or the absence of some stray farthing, wanted to complete the necessary of the sum total. In the balancing of the books she displayed a most businesslike sharpness and strictness. The slightest fault was detected and remarked on in few words, but with a quick searching glance. However, the accountant had evidently been accustomed to her surveillance, for on the whole his books were a specimen of mathematical correctness.

'Very well,' said Miss Laury, as she closed the volumes. 'Your accounts do you credit, Mr O'Neill. You may tell his grace that all is quite right. Your memoranda tally with my own exactly.' Mr O'Neill bowed.

'Thank you, madam.' Taking up his books, he seemed about to leave the room. Before he did so, however, he turned and said,

'The duke wished me to inform you, madam, that he would probably be here about four or five o'clock in the afternoon.'

'Today?' asked Miss Laury in an accent of surprise. 'Yes, madam.' She paused a moment, then said quickly,

'Very well, sir.' Mr O'Neill now took his leave with another bow of low and respectful obeisance. Miss Laury returned it with a slight abstracted bow; her thoughts were all caught up and hurried away by that last communication. For a long time after the door had closed, she sat with her head on her hand, lost in a tumultuous flush of ideas — anticipations awakened by that simple sentence, 'The duke will be here today.'

The striking of the timepiece roused her. She remembered that twenty tasks waited her direction. Always active, always employed, it was not her custom to while away hours in dreaming. She rose, closed her desk, and left the quiet library for busier scenes.

Four o'clock came and Miss Laury's foot was heard on the staircase, descending from her chamber. She crossed the large, light passage, an apparition of feminine elegance and beauty. She had dressed herself splendidly: the robe of black satin became at once her slender form, which it enveloped in full and shining folds, and her bright, blooming complexion, which it set off by the contrast of colour. Glittering through her curls there was a band of fine diamonds, and drops of the same pure gem trembled from her small, delicate ears. These ornaments, so regal in their nature, had been the gift of royalty, and were worn now chiefly for the associations of soft and happy moments which their gleam might be supposed to convey.

She entered her drawing room and stood by the window. From thence appeared one glimpse of the high-road, visible through the thickening shades of Rivaulx; even that was now almost concealed by the frozen mist in which the approach of twilight was wrapt. All was very quiet, both in the house and in the wood. A carriage drew near, she heard the sound. She saw it shoot through the fog. But it was not Zamorna.

She had not gazed a minute before her experienced eye discerned that there was something wrong with the horses — the harness had got entangled, or they were frightened. The coachman had lost command over them, they were plunging violently. She rung the bell; a servant entered; she ordered immediate assistance to be despatched to that carriage on the road. Two grooms presently hurried down the drive to execute her commands, but before they could reach the spot, one of the horses, in its gambols, had slipped on the icy road and fallen. The others grew more unmanageable, and presently the carriage lay overturned on the roadside. One of Miss Laury's messengers came back. She threw up the window.

'Anybody hurt?'

'I hope not much, madam.'

'Who is in the carriage?'

'Only one lady, and she seems to have fainted. She looked very white when I opened the door. What is to be done, madam?' Miss Laury, with Irish frankness, answered directly.

'Bring the lady in directly, and make the servants comfortable.'

'Yes, madam.'

Miss Laury shut her window; it was very cold. Not many minutes elapsed before the lady, in the arms of her own servant, was slowly brought up the lawn and ushered into the drawing-room.

'Lay her on the sofa,' said Miss Laury. The lady's travelling cloak was carefully removed, and a thin figure became apparent in a dark silk dress: the cushions of down scarcely sunk under the pressure, it was so light.

Her swoon was now passing off. The genial warmth of the fire, which shone full on her, revived her. Opening her eyes, she looked up at Miss Laury's face, who was bending close over her, wetting her lips with some cordial. Recognising a stranger, she shyly turned her glance aside. She looked keenly round the room, and seeing the perfect elegance of its arrangement, the cheerful and tranquil glow of a hearthlight, she appeared to grow more composed.

'To whom am I indebted for this kindness? Where am I?'

'In a hospitable country, madam. The Angrians never turn their backs on strangers.'

'I know I am in Angria,' she said quietly, 'but where? What is the name of this house, and who are you?'

Miss Laury coloured slightly. It seemed as if there were some undefinable reluctance to give her real name; she knew she was widely celebrated — too widely; most likely the lady would turn from her in contempt if she heard it. Miss Laury felt she could not bear that.

'I am only the housekeeper,' she said. 'This is a shooting lodge belonging to a great Angrian proprietor —'

'Who?' asked the lady, who was not to be put off by indirect answers. Again Miss Laury hesitated; for her life she could not have said 'His Grace the Duke of Zamorna.' She replied hastily.

'A gentleman of western extraction, a distant branch of the great Pakenhams — so at least the family records say, but they have been long naturalised in the east —'

'I never heard of them,' replied the lady. 'Pakenham? That is not an Angrian name!'

'Perhaps, madam, you are not particularly acquainted with this part of the country —'

'I know Hawkscliffe,' said the lady, 'and your house is on the very borders, within the royal liberties, is it not?'

'Yes, madam. It stood there before the great duke bought up the forest manor, and his majesty allowed my master to retain this lodge and the privilege of sporting in the chase.'

'Well, and you are Mr Pakenham's housekeeper?'

'Yes, madam.' The lady surveyed Miss Laury with another furtive side-glance of her large, majestic eyes. Those eyes lingered upon the diamond earrings, the bandeau of brilliants that flashed from between the clusters of raven curls; then passed over the sweet face, the exquisite figure of the young housekeeper; and finally were reverted to the wall with an expression that spoke volumes. Miss Laury could have torn the dazzling pendants from her ears; she was bitterly stung. 'Everybody knows me,' she said to herself. '“Mistress” I suppose is branded on my brow —'

[Realizing that Mina is lying, Mary asks for a room to withdraw to and concocts her own story: she is 'Mrs Irving', whose husband is a minister from the north. Mary retires; Mina, below, awaits Zamorna's arrival.]

Five o'clock now struck. It was nearly dark. A servant with a taper was lighting up the chandeliers in the large dining room where a table, spread for dinner, received the kindling lamplight upon a starry service of silver. It was likewise flashed back from a splendid sideboard, all arranged in readiness to receive the great, the expected, guest.

Tolerably punctual in keeping an appointment when he meant to keep it at all — Zamorna entered the house as the fairylike voice of a musical clock in the passage struck out its symphony to the pendulum. The opening of the front door, a bitter rush of the night wind; then the sudden close and the step advancing were the signals of his arrival.

Miss Laury was in the dining room looking round and giving the last touch to all things. She just met her master as he entered. His

cold lip pressed to her forehead, and his colder hand clasping hers, brought the sensation which it was her custom of weeks and months to wait for, and to consider, when attained, as the single recompense of all delay and all toil, all suffering.

'I am frozen, Mina,' said he. 'I came on horseback for the last four miles and the night is like Canada.' Chafing his icy hand to animation between her own warm and supple palms, she answered by the speechless but expressive look of joy, satisfaction, and idolatry which filled and overflowed her eyes.

'What can I do for you, my lord?' were her first words, as he stood by the fire raising his hands cheerily over the blaze. He laughed.

'Put your arms around my neck, Mina, and kiss my cheek as warm and blooming as your own.'

If Mina Laury had been Mina Wellesley, she would have done so; and it gave her a pang to resist the impulse that urged her to take him at his word. But she put it by and only diffidently drew near the arm chair into which he had now thrown himself, and began to smooth and separate the curls on his temples. She noticed, as the first smile of salutation subsided, a gloom succeeded on her master's brow, which, however he spoke or laughed afterwards, remained a settled characteristic of his countenance.

'What visitors are in the house?' he asked. 'I saw the groom rubbing down four black horses before the stables as I came in.'

'A carriage was overturned at the lodge gates about an hour since; as the lady who was in it was taken out insensible, I ordered her to be brought up here and her servants accommodated for the night.'

'And do you know who the lady is?' continued his grace. 'The horses are good — first rate.'

'She says her name is Mrs Irving, and that she is the wife of a Presbyterian minister in the north, but —'

'You hardly believe her?' interrupted the duke.

'No,' returned Miss Laury. 'I must say I took her for a lady of rank. She has something highly aristocratic about her manners and aspect, and she appeared to know a good deal about Angria.'

'What is she like?' asked Zamorna. 'Young or old, handsome or ugly?'

'She is young, slender, not so tall as I, and I should say rather elegant than handsome; very pale and cold in her demeanour. She has a small mouth and chin and a very fair neck —'

'Perhaps you did not say to whom the house belonged, Mina?'

'I said,' replied Mina smiling, 'the owner of the house was a great Angrian proprietor, a lineal descendant of the western Pakenhams, and that I was his housekeeper.'

'Very good; she would not believe you. You look like an Angrian country gentleman's dolly. Give me your hand, my girl. Are you not as old as I am?'

'Yes, my lord duke. I was born on the same day, an hour after your grace.'

'So I have heard, but it must be a mistake. You don't look twenty, and I am twenty-five, my beautiful western. What eyes! Look at me, Mina — straight and don't blush —' Mina tried to look, but she could not do it without blushing. She coloured to the temples.

'Pshaw!' said his grace, putting her away. 'Pretending to be modest. My acquaintance of ten years cannot meet my eye unshrinkingly. Have you lost that ring I once gave you, Mina?'

'What ring, my lord? You have given me many.'

'That which I said had the essence of your whole heart and mind engraven in the stone as a motto.'

'Fidelity?' asked Miss Laury, and she held out her hand with a graven emerald on her forefinger.

'Right,' was the reply. 'Is it your motto still?' And with one of his haughty, jealous glances he seemed trying to read her conscience. Miss Laury at once saw that late transactions were not a secret confined between herself and Lord Hartford. She saw his grace was unhinged and strongly inclined to be savage; she stood and watched him with a sad, fearful gaze.

'Well,' she said, turning away after a long pause, 'If your grace is angry with me, I've very little to care about in this world —' The entrance of servants with the dinner prevented Zamorna's answer . . .

It was not till after the cloth was withdrawn and the servants had retired that the duke, whilst he sipped his single glass of champagne, recommenced the conversation he had before so unpleasantly entered upon.

'Come here, my girl,' he said, drawing a seat close to his side. Mina never delayed nor hesitated, through bashfulness or any other feeling, to comply with his orders.

'Now,' he continued, leaning his head towards hers, and placing his hand on her shoulder, 'are you happy, Mina? Do you want anything?'

'Nothing, my lord.' She spoke truly. All that was capable of yielding her happiness on this side of eternity was at that moment within her reach. The room was full of calm. The lamps hung as if they were listening; the fire sent up no flickering flame, but diffused a broad, still, glowing light over all the spacious saloon. Zamorna touched her. His form and features filled her eye, his voice her ear, his presence her whole heart. She was soothed to perfect happiness.

'My Fidelity,' pursued that musical voice, 'if thou hast any favour to ask, now is the time. I'm all concession — as sweet as honey, as yielding as a lady's glove. Come, Esther, what is thy petition and thy request? Even to the half of my kingdom it shall be granted.'

'Nothing', again murmured Miss Laury. 'Oh, my lord, nothing. What can I want?'

'Nothing?' he repeated. 'What, no reward for ten years' faith and love and devotion? No reward for the companionship in six months' exile? No recompense to the little hand that has so often smoothed my pillow in sickness, to the sweet lips that have many a time in cool and dewy health been pressed to a brow of fever? None to the dark Milesian eyes that once grew dim with watching through endless nights by my couch of delirium? Need I speak of the sweetness and fortitude that cheered sufferings known only to thee and me, Mina, of the devotion that gave me bread when thou wert dying of hunger, and that scarcely more than a year since? For all this and much more must there be no reward?'

'I have had it,' said Miss Laury, 'I have it now —'

'But,' continued the duke, 'what if I have devised something worthy of your acceptance? Look up now and listen to me.' She did look up, but she speedily looked down again. Her master's eye was insupportable; it burnt absolutely with infernal fire.

‘What is he going to say?’ murmured Miss Laury to herself. She trembled.

‘I say, love, pursued the individual, drawing her a little closer to him, ‘I will give you as a reward a husband — don’t start now — and that husband shall be a nobleman, and that nobleman is called Lord Hartford! Now, madam, stand up and let me look at you.’ He opened his arms and Miss Laury sprang erect like a loosened bow.

‘Your grace is anticipated!’ she said. ‘That offer has been made me before. Lord Hartford did it himself three days ago.’

‘And what did you say, madam? Speak the truth now. Subterfuge won’t avail you — ‘

‘What did I say? Zamorna, I don’t know — it little signifies. You have rewarded me, my lord duke, but I cannot bear this. I feel sick.’ With a deep short sob, she turned white, and fell, close by the duke, her head against his foot.

This was the first time in her life that Miss Laury had fainted, but strong health availed nothing against the deadly struggle which convulsed every feeling of her nature when she heard her master’s announcement. She believed him to be perfectly sincere; she thought he was tired of her and she could not stand it.

I suppose Zamorna’s first feeling when she fell was horror; and his next, I am tolerably certain, was intense gratification. People say I am not in earnest when I abuse him, or else I would here insert half a page of deserved vituperation: deserved and heartfelt. As it is, I will merely relate his conduct, without note or comment. He took a wax taper from the table and held it over Miss Laury. Hers could be no dissimulation: she went white as marble and still as stone. In truth, then, she did intensely love him with a devotion that left no room in her thoughts for one shadow of an alien image. Do not think, reader, that Zamorna meant to be so generous as to bestow Miss Laury on Lord Hartford. No; trust him; he was but testing in his usual way the attachment which a thousand proofs daily given ought long ago to have convinced him was undying.

While he yet gazed, she began to recover. Her eyelids stirred; then slowly dawned from beneath the large black orbs that scarcely met his before they filled to overflowing with sorrow. Not a gleam of anger, not a whisper of reproach; her lips and eyes spoke together no other language than the simple words,

‘I cannot leave you.’ She rose feebly, and with effort. The duke stretched out his hand to assist her. He held to her lips the scarcely tasted wine glass. ‘Mina,’ he said, ‘are you collected enough to hear me?’

‘Yes, my lord.’

‘Then listen. I would much sooner give half — aye, the whole of my estates to Lord Hartford than yourself. What I said just now was only to try you.’ Miss Laury raised her eyes, sighed like awaking from some hideous dream, but she could not speak..

‘Would I,’ continued the duke, ‘would I resign the possession of my first love to any hands but my own? I would far rather see her in her coffin. I would lay you there as still, as white, and much more lifeless than you were stretched just now at my feet, before I would for threat, for entreaty, for purchase, give to another a glance of your eye, a smile from your lip. I know you adore me now, for you could not feign that agitation; and therefore I will tell you what a proof I gave yesterday of my regard for you. Hartford mentioned your name in my presence, and I revenged the profanation by a shot which sent him to his bed little better than a corpse.’

Miss Laury shuddered, but so dark and profound are the mysteries of human nature, ever allying vice with virtue, that I fear this bloody proof of her master’s love brought to her heart more rapture than horror. She said not a word, for now Zamorna’s arms were again folded round her; again he was soothing her to tranquillity, by endearments and caresses that far away removed all thought of the world, all past pangs of shame, all cold doubts, all weariness, all heartsickness resulting from hope long-deferred. He had told her that she was his first love, and now she felt tempted to believe that she was likewise his only love. Strong-minded beyond her sex, active, energetic, and accomplished in all other points of view, here she was as weak as a child. She lost her identity. Her very way of life was swallowed up in that of another.

[The tête-à-tête is interrupted by Zamorna’s valet, who calls him from the room to deliver the embarrassing intelligence that ‘Mrs Irving’, now wandering about the halls, bears a disconcerting resemblance to his wife, the duchess.]

‘I was walking carelessly through the passage about ten minutes since, when I heard a step on the stairs — a light step, as if of a very small foot. I turned, and there was a lady coming down. My lord, she was a lady!’

‘Well, sir, did you know her?’

‘I think, if my eyes were not bewitched, I did. I stood in the shade screened by a pillar and she passed very near without observing me. I saw her distinctly, and may I be damned this very moment if it was not — ‘

‘Who, sir?’

‘The duchess!!’ There was a pause, which was closed by a remarkably prolonged whistle from the duke. He put both his hands into his pockets and took a leisurely turn through the room. ‘You’re sure?’ he said. ‘I know you dare not tell me a lie in such matters. Aye, it’s true enough, I’ll be sworn. Mrs Irving, wife of a minister in the north. A satirical hit at my royal self, by God. Pale, fair neck, little mouth and chin. Very good! I wish that same little mouth and chin were about a hundred miles off. What can have brought her? Anxiety about her invaluable husband? Could not bear any longer without him? Obligated to set off to see what he was doing? If she had entered the room unexpectedly about five minutes since — God! I should have had no resource but to tie her hand and foot. It would have killed her. What the devil shall I do? Must not be angry, she can’t do with that sort of thing just now. Talk softly, reprove her gently, swear black and white to my having no connection with Mr Pakenham’s housekeeper — -’ Closing his sililoquy, the duke turned again to his valet.

‘What room did her grace go into?’

‘The drawing room, my lord. She’s there now.’

‘Well, say nothing about it, on pain of sudden death. Do you hear sir?’ He laid his hand on his heart and Zamorna left the room to commence operations.

Softly unclosing the drawing room door, he perceived a lady by the hearth. Her back was towards him, but there could be no mistake. The whole turn of form, the style of dress, the curled auburn head: all were attributes of but one person, of his own unique, haughty, jealous little duchess. He closed the door as noiselessly as he had opened it, and stole forwards.

The duchess felt a hand press her shoulder, and she looked up. The force of attraction had its usual result, and she clung to what she saw.

‘Adrian! Adrian!’ was all her lips could utter.

‘Mary! Mary!’ replied the duke, allowing her to hang about him. ‘Pretty doings! What brought you here? Are you running away, eloping in my absence?’

‘Adrian, why did you leave me? You said you would come back in a week, and it’s eight days since you left me. Do come home —’

‘So, you actually have set off in search of a husband,’ said Zamorna, laughing heartily, ‘and been overturned and obliged to take shelter in Pakenham’s shooting box!’

‘Why are you here, Adrian?’ enquired the duchess, who was far too much in earnest to join in his laugh. ‘Who is Pakenham and who is that person who calls herself his housekeeper? Why do you let anybody live so near Hawkscliffe without ever telling me?’

‘I forgot to tell you,’ said his grace. ‘I’ve other things to think about when those bright hazel eyes are looking up at me. As for Pakenham, to tell you the truth — he’s a sort of left-hand cousin of your own, being natural son to the old admiral, my uncle, in the south; his housekeeper is his sister. Voila tout. Kiss me now.’ The duchess did kiss him, but it was with a heavy sigh. The cloud of jealous anxiety hung on her brow undissipated.

‘Adrian, my heart aches still. Why have you been staying so long in Angria? O, you don’t care for me! You have never thought how miserably I have been longing for your return. Adrian —’ she stopped and cried.

‘Mary, recollect yourself,’ said his grace. ‘I cannot be always at your feet. You were not so weak when we were first married. You let me leave you often then without any jealous remonstrance.’

‘I did not know you so well at that time,’ said Mary, ‘and if my mind is weakened, all its strength has gone away in tears and terrors for you. I am neither so handsome nor so cheerful as I once was. But you ought to forgive my decay because you have caused it.’

‘Mary, never again reproach yourself with loss of beauty till I give the hint first. Believe me now, in that and every other respect, you are just what I wish you to be. You cannot fade any more than marble can — at least not to my eyes. As for your devotion and tenderness, though I chide its excess sometimes because it wastes and bleaches you almost to a shadow, yet it forms the very firmest chain that binds me to you. Now cheer up. Tonight you shall go to Hawkscliffe; it is only five miles off. I cannot accompany you because I have some important business to transact with Pakenham which must not be deferred. Tomorrow I will be at the castle before dawn. The carriage shall be ready, I will put you in, myself beside you. Off we go, straight to Verdopolis, and there for the next three months I will tire you of my company, morning, noon, and night. Now, what can I promise more? If you choose to be jealous, why, I can’t help it. I must then take to soda water and despair, or have myself petrified and carved into an Apollo for your dressing room. Lord! I get no credit with my virtue —’ By dint of lies and laughter the individual at last succeeded in getting all things settled to his mind. The duchess went to Hawkscliffe that night. Keeping his promise, for once, he accompanied her to Verdopolis the next morning —

Lord Hartford still lies between life and death. His passion is neither weakened by pain, piqued by rejection, nor cooled by absence. On the iron nerves of the man are graven an impression which nothing can efface.

For a long space of time, good-bye reader. I have done my best to please you, and though I know that through feebleness, dullness, and iteration my work terminates rather in failure than triumph, yet you are bound to forgive, for I have done my best —

January, 1838

MINA LAURY PART II

Late one fine still evening in January the moon arose over a blue summit of the Sydenham Hills and looked down on a quiet road winding from the hamlet of Rivaulx. The earth was bound in frost – hard, mute and glittering. The forest of Hawkscliffe was as still as a tomb, and its black leafless wilds stretched away in the distance and cut off with a harsh serrated line the sky from the country. That sky was all silver blue, pierced here and there with a star like a diamond. Only the moon softened it, large, full, and golden. The by-road I have spoken of received her ascending beam on a path of perfect solitude. Spectral pines and vast old beech trees guarded the way like sentinels from Hawkscliffe. Farther on the rude track wound deep into the shades of the forest, but here it was open and the worn causeway, bleached with frost, ran under an old wall grown over with moss and wild ivy.

Over this scene the sun of winter had gone down in cloudless calm, red as fire, and kindling with its last beams the windows of a mansion on the verge of Hawkscliffe. To that mansion the road in question was the shortest cut from Rivaulx. And here a moment let us wait, wrapped, it is to be hoped, in furs, for a keener frost never congealed the Olympia.

Almost before you are aware a figure strays up the causeway at a leisurely pace, musing amid the tranquillity of evening. Doubtless that figure must be an inmate of the before-mentioned mansion, for it is an elegant and pleasing object. Approaching gradually nearer, you can observe most accurately a lady of distinguished carriage, straight and slender, something inceding and princess-like in her walk, but unconsciously so. Her ankles are so perfect, and her feet – if she tried, she could scarcely tread otherwise than she does – lightly, firmly, erectly. The ermine muff, the silk pelisse, the graceful and ample hat of dark beaver, suit and set off her light youthful form. She is deeply veiled; you must guess at her features – but she passes on and a turn of the road conceals her.

Breaking up the silence, dashing in on the solitude, comes a horseman. Fire flashes from under his steed's hoofs out of the flinty road. He rides desperately. Now and then he rises in his stirrups and eagerly looks along the track as if to catch a sight of some object that has eluded him. He sees it, and the spurs are struck mercilessly into his horse's flanks. Horse and rider vanish in a whirlwind.

The lady passing through the iron gates had just entered upon the demesne of Hawkscliffe. She paused to gaze at the moon which, now full risen, looked upon her through the boughs of a superb elm. A green lawn lay between her and the house, and there its light slumbered in gold. Thundering behind her, came the sound of hoofs, and, bending low to his saddle to avoid the contact of oversweeping branches, that wild horseman we saw five minutes since rushed upon the scene. Harshly curbing the charger, he brought it almost upon its haunches close to the spot where she stood.

'Miss Laury! Good evening!' he said. The lady threw back her veil, surveyed him with one glance, and replied:

'Lord Hartford! I am glad to see you, my lord. You have ridden fast. Your horse foams. Any bad news?'

'No!'

'Then you are on your way to Adrianopolis. I suppose you will pass the night here?'

'If you ask me, I will.'

'If I ask you! Yes; this is the proper half-way house between the capitals. The night is cold, let us go in.'

They were now at the door. Hartford flung himself from his saddle. A servant came to lead the over-ridden steed to the stables, and he followed Miss Laury in.

It was her own drawing room to which she led him, just such a scene as is most welcome after the contrast of a winter evening's chill; not a large room, simply furnished, with curtains and couches of green silk, a single large mirror, a Grecian lamp dependent from the centre softly burning now and mingling with the softer illumination of the fire, whose brilliant glow bore testimony to the keenness of the frost.

Hartford glanced round him. He had been in Miss Laury's drawing room before, but never as her sole guest. He had, before the troubles broke out, more than once formed one of a high and important trio whose custom it was to make the lodge of Rivaulx their occasional rendezvous: Warner, Enara, and himself had often stood on that hearth in a ring round Miss Laury's sofa, and he recalled how her face looking up to them with its serious, soft intelligence that blent no woman's frivolity with the heartfelt interest of those subjects on which they conversed. He remembered those first kindlings of the flame that now devoured his life as he watched her beauty and saw the earnest enthusiasm with which she threw her soul into topics of the highest import. She had often done for these great men what they could get no man to do for them. She had kept their secrets and executed their wishes as far as in her lay, for it had never been her part to counsel. With humble feminine devotedness she always looked up for her task to be set, and then not Warner himself could have bent his energies more resolutely to the fulfilment of that task than did Miss Laury. Had Mina's lot in life been different, she never would have interfered in such matters. She did not interfere now: she only served. Nothing like intrigue had ever stained her course in politics. She told her directors what she had done, and she asked for more to do, grateful always that they would trust her so far as to employ her, grateful too for the enthusiasm of their loyalty; in short, devoted to them heart and mind because she believed in them to be devoted as unreservedly to the common master of all.

The consequence of this species of deeply confidential intercourse between the statesmen and their beautiful lieutenant had been intense and chivalric admiration on the part of Mr Warner; strong fond attachment on that of General Enara; and on Lord Hartford's the burning brand of passion. His Lordship had always been a man of strong and ill-regulated feelings, and in his youth (if report may be credited) of somewhat dissolute habits, but he had his own ideas of honour strongly implanted in his breast, and though he would not have scrupled if the wife of one of his equals, or the daughter of one of his tenants had been in the question, yet as it was he stood beset and nonplussed.

Miss Laury belonged to the Duke of Zamorna. She was indisputably his property, as much as the Lodge of Rivaulx or the stately wood of Hawkscliffe, and in that light she considered herself. All his dealings with her had been on matters connected with the Duke, and she had ever shown an habitual, rooted, solemn devotedness to his interest which seemed to leave her hardly a thought for anything else in the world beside. She had but one idea – Zamorna! Zamorna! It had grown up with her, become a part of her nature. Absence, coldness, total neglect for long periods together went for nothing. She could not more feel alienation from him than she could

from herself. She did not even repine when he forgot her any more than the religious devotee does when his Deity seems to turn away his face for a time and leave him to the ordeal of temporal afflictions. It seemed as if she could have lived on the remembrance of what he had once been to her without asking for anything more.

All this Hartford knew, and he knew, too, that she valued himself in proportion as she believed him to be royal to his sovereign. Her friendship for him turned on this hinge: 'We have been fellow-labourers and fellow-sufferers together in the same good cause' These were her own words which she had uttered one night as she took leave of her three noble colleagues just before the storm broke over Angria. Hartford had noticed the expression of her countenance as she spoke, and thought what a young and beautiful being thus appealed for sympathy with minds scarcely like her own in mould.

However, let us dwell no longer on these topics. Suffice it to say that Lord Hartford, against reason and without hope, had finally delivered himself wholly up to the guidance of his vehement passions; and it was with the resolution to make one desperate effort in the attainment of their end that he now stood before the lady of Rivaulx.

Above two hours had elapsed since Lord Hartford had entered the house. Tea was over, and in the perfect quiet of evening he and Miss Laury were left together. He sat on one side of the hearth, and she on the other – her work-table only between them, and on that her little hand rested within his reach. It was embedded in a veil of lace, the embroidering of which she had just relinquished for a moment's thought. Lord Hartford's eye was fascinated by the white soft fingers. His own heart at the moment was in a tumult of bliss. To be so near, to be received so benignly, so kindly – he forgot himself. His own hand closed half involuntarily upon hers. Miss Laury looked at him Shocked for a moment, almost overwhelmed, she yet speedily mastered her emotions, took her hand away, resumed her work, and with head bent down, seemed endeavouring to conceal embarrassment under the appearance of occupation.

The dead silence that followed would not do, so she broke it in a very calm, self-possessed tone.

'That ring, Lord Hartford, which you were admiring just now belonged once to the Duchess of Wellington'

'And was it given you by her son?' asked the General bitterly.

'No, my lord, the Duchess herself gave it me a few days before she died. It has her maiden name "Catherine Pakenham", engraved within the stone'.

'But', pursued Hartford, 'I was not admiring the ring when I touched your hand. No; the thought struck me, if ever I marry I should like my wife's hand to be just as white and snowy and taper as that.'

'I am the daughter of a common soldier, my lord, and it is said that ladies of high descent have fairer hands than peasant women.'

Hartford made no reply. He rose restlessly from his seat and stood against the mantelpiece.

'Miss Laury, shall I tell you which was the happiest hour of my life?'

'I will guess, my lord. Perhaps when the bill passed which made Angria an independent kingdom.'

'No,' replied Hartford with an expressive smile.

'Perhaps, then, when Lord Northangerland resigned the seals - for I know you and the Earl were never on good terms'.

'No. I hated his lordship, but there are moments of deeper felicity even than those which see the triumph of a fallen enemy'.

'I will hope that it was at the Restoration.'

'Wrong again! Why, madam, young as you are your mind is so used to the harness of politics that you can imagine no happiness or misery unconnected with them. You remind me of Warner.'

'I believe I am like him', returned Miss Laury. 'He often tells me so himself, but I live so much with men and statesmen I almost lose the ideas of a woman'.

'Do you?' muttered Hartford with the dark sinister smile peculiar to him'.

Miss Laury passed over this equivocal remark and proceeded with the conversation.

'I cannot guess your riddle, my lord, so I think you must explain it'.

'Then, Miss Laury, prepare to be astonished. You are so patriotic, so loyal that you will scarcely credit me when I say that the happiest hour I have ever known fell on the darkest day in the deadliest crisis of Angria's calamities'.

'How, Lord Hartford?'

'Moreover, miss Laury, it was at no bright period of your own life. It was to you an hour of the most acute agony; to me one of ecstasy'.

Miss Laury turned aside her head with a disturbed air and trembled. She seemed to know to what he alluded.

'You remember the first of July, '36?' continued Hartford.

She bowed.

'You remember that the evening of that day closed in a tremendous storm?'

'Yes, my lord.'

'You recollect how you sat in this very room by this fireside, fearful of retiring for the night lest you should awake in another world in the morning. The country was not then as quiet as it is now. You have not forgotten that deep explosion which roared up at midnight and told you that your life and liberty hung on a thread, that the enemy had come suddenly upon Rivaulx, and that we who lay there to defend the forlorn hope were surprised and routed by a night attack. Then madam, perhaps you recollect the warning which I brought you at one o'clock in the morning, to fly instantly, unless you chose the alternative of infamous captivity in the hands of Jordan. I found you here, sitting by a black hearth without fire, and Ernest Fitz-Arthur lay on your knee asleep. You told me you had heard the firing, and that you were waiting for some communication from me, determined not to stir without orders lest a precipitate step on your part should embarrass me. I had a carriage already in waiting for you. I put you in, and with the remains of my defeated followers escorted you as far as Zamorna. What followed after that, Miss Laury?'

Miss Laury covered her eyes with her hand. She seemed as if she could not answer.

'Well', continued Hartford. 'In the midst of darkness and tempest, and while the whole city of Zamorna seemed changed into a hell peopled with fiends and inspired with madness, my lads were hewed down about you, and your carriage was stopped. I very well remember what you did – how frantically you struggled to save Fitz-Arthur, and how you looked at me when he was snatched from you. As to your own preservation – that, I need not repeat – only my arm did it. You acknowledge that, Miss Laury?'

‘Hartford, I do, but why do you dwell on that terrible scene?’

‘Because I am now approaching the happiest hour of my life. I took you to the house of one of my tenants whom I could depend upon, and just as morning dawned you and I sat together and alone in the little chamber of a farm-house, and you were in my arms, your head upon my shoulder, and weeping out all your anguish on a breast that longed to bleed for you’.

Miss Laury agitatedly rose. She approached Hartford.

‘My lord, you have been very kind to me and I feel very grateful for that kindness. Perhaps sometime I may be able to repay it. We know not how the chances of fortune may turn. The weak have aided the strong, and I will watch vigilantly for the slightest opportunity to serve you, but I do not talk in this way. I scarcely know whither your words tend’.

Lord Hartford paused a moment before he replied. Gazing at her with bended brows and folded arms he said:

‘Miss Laury, what do you think of me?’

‘That you are one of the noblest hearts in the world!’ she replied unhesitatingly. She was standing just before Hartford, looking up at him, her hair in that attitude falling back from her brow, shading with exquisite curls her temples and slender neck; her small, sweet features, with that high seriousness deepening their beauty, lit up by her eyes so large, so dark, so swimming, so full of pleading benignity, of an expression of alarmed regard, as if she at once feared for and pitied the sinful abstraction of a great mind. Hartford couldn’t stand it. He could have borne female anger or terror, but the look of enthusiastic gratitude softened by compassion nearly unmanned him. He turned his head for a moment aside but then passion prevailed. Her beauty when he looked again struck through him – maddening sensation whetted to acuter power by a feeling like despair.

‘You shall love me!’ he exclaimed desperately; ‘Do I not adore you? Would I not die for you? And must I in return receive only the cold regard of friendship? I am not a Platonist, Miss Laury – I am not your friend. I am, hear me, madam, your declared lover! Nay, you shall not leave me; by heaven – I am stronger than you are’.

She had stepped a pace or two back, appalled by his vehemence. He thought she meant to withdraw, and, determined not to be so balked, he clasped her at once in both his arms and kissed her furiously rather than fondly. Miss Laury did not struggle.

‘Hartford’, said she steadying her voice, though it faltered in spite of her effort, ‘this must be our parting scene. I will never see you again if you do not restrain yourself’.

Hartford saw that she turned pale, and he felt her tremble violently. His arms relaxed their hold. He allowed her to leave him.

She sat down on a chair opposite and hurriedly wiped her brow which was damp and marble-pale.

‘Now, Miss Laury’, said his lordship, ‘no man in the world loves you as I do. Will you accept my title and my coronet? I fling them at your feet’.

‘My lord, do you know whose I am?’ she replied in a hollow and very suppressed tone. ‘Do you know with what a sound those proposals fall on my ear – how impious and blasphemous they seem to be? Do you at all conceive how utterly impossible it is that I should ever love you? The scene I have just witnessed has given a strange wrench to all my accustomed habits of thought. I thought you a true-hearted, faithful man: I find that you are a traitor’.

‘And do you despise me?’ asked Hartford.

‘No, my lord, I do not’.

She paused and looked down. The colour rose rapidly into her pale face. She sobbed, not in tears, but in the overmastering approach of an impulse born of a warm and Western heart. Again she looked up. Her eyes had changed, their aspect beaming with a wild, bright inspiration, truly, divinely Irish.

‘Hartford’, said she, ‘had I met you long since, before I left Ellibank and forgot St. Cyprian and dishonoured my father, I would have loved you. O my lord, you know not how truly! I would have married you and made it the glory of my life to cheer and brighten your hearth, but I cannot do so now – never. I saw my present master when he had scarcely attained manhood. Do you think, Hartford, I will tell you what feelings I had for him? No tongue could express them; they were so fervid, so glowing in their colour that they effaced everything else. I lost the power of properly appreciating the value of the world’s opinion, of discerning the difference between right and wrong. I have never in my life contradicted Zamorna, never delayed obedience to his commands. I could not. He was something more to me than a human being. He superseded all things – all affections, all interests, all fears or hopes or principles. Unconnected with him my mind would be a blank, cold, dead, susceptible only of a sense of despair. How should I sicken if were torn from him and thrown to you! Do not ask it; I would die first. No woman that ever loved my master could consent to leave him. There is nothing like him elsewhere. Hartford, if I were to be your wife, if Zamorna only looked at me, I should creep back like a slave to my former service. I should disgrace you as I have long since disgraced all my kindred. Think of that, my lord, and never say you love me again’.

‘You do not frighten me’, replied Lord Hartford hardily; ‘I would stand that chance, aye, and every other, if I only might see at the head of my table in that old dining room at Hartford Hall yourself as my wife and lady. I am called proud as it is, but then I would show Angria to what pitch of pride a man might attain, if I could, coming home at night, find Mina Laury waiting to receive me; if I could sit down and look at you with the consciousness that your exquisite beauty was all my own, that cheek, those lips, that lovely hand, might be claimed arbitrarily, and you dare not refuse me, I should then feel happy’.

‘Hartford, you would be more likely when you came home to find your house vacant and your hearth deserted. I know the extent of my own infatuation. I should go back to Zamorna and entreat him on my knees to let me be his slave again!’

‘Madam’, said Hartford frowning, ‘you dared not if you were my wife; I would guard you!’

‘Then I should die under your guardianship. But the experiment will never be tried!’

Hartford came near, sat down by her side, and leaned over her. She did not shrink away.

‘Oh!’ he said, ‘I am happy. There was a time when I dared not have come so near you. One summer evening two years ago I was walking in the twilight amongst those trees on the lawn, and at a turn I saw you sitting at the foot of one of them by yourself’.

‘You were looking up at a star which was twinkling above the Sydenhams. You were in white; your hands were folded on your knee, and your hair was resting in still, shining curls on your neck. I stood and watched. The thought struck me: if that image sat now in my own woods, if she were something in which I had an interest, if I could go and press my lips to her brow and expect a smile in

answer to the caress, if I could take her in my arms and turn her thought from that sky with its single star, and from the distant country to which it points (for it hung in the west and I know you were thinking about Senegambia), if I could attract those thoughts and centre them all in myself, how like heaven would the world become to me. I heard a window open, and Zamorna's voice called through the silence, "Mina!" The next moment I had the pleasure of seeing you standing on the lawn, close under the very casement where the Duke sat leaning out, and you were allowing his hand to stray through your hair, and his lips -

'Lord Hartford!' exclaimed Miss Laury, colouring to the eyes, 'this is more than I can bear, I have not been angry yet. I thought it folly to rage at you, because you said you loved me, but what you have just said is like touching a nerve; it overpowers all reason; it is like a stinging taunt which I am under no obligation to endure from you. Every one knows what I am, but where is the woman in Africa who would have acted more wisely than I did if under the same circumstances she had been subject to the same temptations?'

'That is', returned Hartford, whose eye was now glittering with a desperate, reckless expression, 'where is the woman in Africa who would have said no to young Douro when amongst the romantic hills of Ellibank he has pressed his suit on some fine moonlight summer night, and the girl and boy have found themselves alone in a green dell, with here and there a tree to be their shade, far above the stars for their sentinels, and around, the night for their wide curtain'.

The wild bounding throb of Miss Laury's heart was visible through her satin bodice – it was even audible as for a moment Hartford ceased his scoffing to note its effect. He was still close by her, and she did not move from him. She did not speak. The pallid lamp-light shewed her lips white, her cheek bloodless.

He continued unrelentingly and bitterly: 'In after times, doubtless, the woods of Hawkscliffe have witnessed many a tender scene, with the king of Angria has retired from the turmoil of business and the teasing of matrimony to love and leisure with his gentle mistress'.

'Now, Hartford, we must part', interrupted Miss Laury, 'I see what opinion of me is, and it is very just, but not one which I willingly hear expressed. You have cut me to the heart. Good bye. I shall try to avoid seeing you for the future.'

She rose. Hartford did not attempt to detain her. She went out. As she closed the door, he heard the bursting convulsive gush of feelings which his taunts had brought up to agony.

Her absence left a blank. Suddenly a wish to recall, to soothe, to propitiate her rose in his mind. He strode to the door and opened it. There was a little hall or rather a wide passage without in which one large lamp was quietly burning. Nothing appeared here, nor on the staircase of low broad steps in which it terminated. She seemed to have vanished.

Lord Hartford's hat and horseman's cloak lay on the side slab. There remained no further attraction for him at the Lodge of Rivaulx. The delirious dream of rapture which had intoxicated his sense broke up and disappeared. His passionate, stern nature maddened under disappointment. He strode out into the black and frozen night burning in flames no ice could quench. He ordered and mounted his steed, and, dashing his spurs with harsh cruelty up to the rowels into the flanks of the noble war-horse which had borne him victoriously through the carnage of Westwood and Leyden, he dashed in furious gallop down the road to Rivaulx.

Miss Laury was sitting after breakfast in a small library. Her desk lay before her and two large ruled quartos filled with items and figures which she seemed to be comparing. Behind her chair stood a tall, well-made, soldierly young man with light hair. His dress was plain and gentlemanly; the epaulette on one shoulder alone indicated an official capacity. He watched with fixed look of attention the movements of the small finger which ascended in rapid calculation the long columns of accounts. It was strange to see the absorption of mind expressed in Miss Laury's face, the gravity of her smooth white brow shaded with drooping curls, the scarcely perceptible and unsmiling movement of her lips, though those lips in their rosy sweetness seemed formed only for smiles. Edward Percy at his ledger could not have appeared more completely wrapt in the mysteries of practice and fractions. An hour or more elapsed in this employment, the room, meantime, continuing in profound silence broken only by an occasional observation addressed by Miss Laury to the gentlemen behind her concerning the legitimacy of some item or the absence of some stray farthing wanted to complete the accuracy of the sum total. In this balancing of the books she displayed a most business-like sharpness and strictness. The slightest fault was detected and remarked on in few words but with a quick searching glance. However, the accountant had evidently been accustomed to her surveillance, for on the whole his books were a specimen of arithmetical correctness.

'Very well', said Miss Laury, as she closed the volumes. 'Your accounts do you credit, Mr. O'Neill. You may tell his Grace that all is quite right. Your memoranda tally with my own exactly.'

Mr. O'Neill bowed. 'Thank you, madam. This will bear me out against Lord Hartford. His lordship lectured me severely last time he came to inspect Fort Adrian'.

'What about?' asked Miss Laury turning aside her face to hide the deepening of colour which overspread it at the mention of Lord Hartford's name.

'I can hardly tell you, madam, but his lordship was in a savage temper. Nothing would please him. He found fault with everything and everybody. I thought he scarcely appeared himself, and that has been the opinion of many lately'.

Miss Laury gently shook her head. 'You should not say so, Ryan', she replied in a soft tone of reproof. 'Lord Hartford has a great many things to think about, and he is naturally rather stern. You ought to bear with his tempers'.

'Necessity has no law, madam', replied Mr. O'Neill with a smile, 'and I must bear with them, but his lordship is not a popular man in the army. He orders the lash so unsparingly. We like the Earl of Arundel ten times better'.

'Ah', said Miss Laury smiling, 'you and I are Westerns, Mr. O'Neill – Irish – and we favour our countrymen. But Hartford is a gallant commander. His men can always trust him. Do not let us be partial'.

Mr. O'Neill bowed in deference to her opinion, but smiled at the same time, as if he doubted its justice. Taking up his books, he seemed about to leave the room. Before he did so, however, he turned and said: 'The Duke wished me to inform you, madam, that he would probably be here about four or five o'clock in the afternoon'.

'Today?' asked Miss Laury in an accent of surprise.

'Yes, madam'.

She mused a moment, then said quickly, 'Very well, sir.'

Mr. O'Neill now took his leave with another low and respectful obeisance. Miss Laury returned it with a slight abstracted bow. Her thoughts were all caught up and hurried away by that last communication. For a long time after the door had closed she sat with her head on her hand, lost in a tumultuous flush of ideas - anticipations awakened by that simple sentence, 'The Duke will be here today'.

The striking of a timepiece roused her. She remembered that twenty tasks awaited her direction. Always active, always employed, it was not her custom to waste many hours in dreaming. She rose, closed her desk, and left the quiet library for busier scenes.

Four o'clock came, and Miss Laury's foot was heard on the stair case descending from her chamber. She crossed the large light passageway - such an apparition of feminine elegance and beauty! She had dressed herself splendidly. The robe of black satin became at once her slender form, which it enveloped in full and shining folds, and her bright blooming complexion, which it set off by the contrast of colour. Glittering through her curls, there was a band of fine diamonds, and drops of the same pure gems trembled from her small, delicate ears. These ornaments, so regal in their nature, had been the gift of royalty, and were worn now chiefly for the associations of soft and happy moments which their gleam might be supposed to convey.

She entered her drawing room and stood by the window. From thence appeared one glimpse of the high-road visible through the thickening shades of Rivaulx. Even that was now almost concealed by the frozen mist in which the approach of twilight was wrapped. All was very quiet both in the house and in the woods. A carriage drew near. She heard the sound. She saw it shoot through the fog; but it was not Zamorna. No; the driving was neither the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, nor that of Jehu's postillions. She had not gazed a minute before her experienced eye discerned that there was something wrong with the horses. The harness had got entangled or they were frightened. The coachman had lost command over them: they were plunging violently.

She rang the bell. A servant entered. She ordered immediate assistance to be despatched to that carriage on the road. Two grooms presently hurried down the drive to execute her command, but before they could reach the spot, one of the horses, in its gambols, had slipped on the icy road and fallen. The others grew more unmanageable, and presently the carriage lay overturned on the roadside. One of Miss Laury's messengers came back. She threw up the window that she might communicate with him more readily.

'Any accident?' she asked. 'Anybody hurt?'

'I hope not much, madam'.

'Who is in the carriage?'

'Only one lady, and she seems to have fainted. She looked very white when I opened the door. What is to be done, madam?'

Miss Laury, with Irish frankness, answered directly, 'Bring them all into the house. Let the horses be taken into the stables. And the servants - how many are there?'

'Three, Madam. Postillions grey and white; footman in plain clothes. Horses frightened at a drove of Sydenham oxen, they say: very spirited nags.'

'Well, you have my orders: bring the lady in directly, and make the others comfortable.'

'Yes, madam'.

The groom touched his hat and departed. Miss Laury shut her window. It was very cold. Not many minutes elapsed before the lady in the arms of her own servants was slowly brought up the lawn and ushered into the drawing room.

'Lay her on the sofa', said Miss Laury.

She was obeyed. The lady's travelling cloak was carefully removed, and a thin figure became apparent in a dark silk dress. The cushions of down scarcely sank under the pressure, it was so light.

Her swoon was now passing off. The genial warmth of the fire which shone full on her revived her. Opening her eyes, she looked up at Miss Laury's face who was bending close over her and wetting her lips with some cordial. Recognising a stranger, she shyly turned her glance aside and asked for her servants.

'They are in the house, madam, and perfectly safe. But you cannot pursue your journey at present; the carriage is much broken.'

The lady lay silent. She looked keenly round the room and seeing the perfect elegance of its arrangement, the cheerful and tranquil glow of its hearth-light, she appeared to grow more composed. Turning a little on the cushions which supported her, and by no means looking at Miss Laury, but straight the other way, she said, 'To whom am I indebted for this kindness? Where am I?'

'In a hospitable country, madam. The Angrians never turn their backs on strangers.'

'I know I am in Angria' she said quickly, 'but where? What is the name of the house? Who are you?'

'Miss Laury coloured slightly. It seemed as if there was some undefined reluctance to give her real name that she knew was widely celebrated - too widely. Most likely the lady would turn from her in contempt if she heard it, and Miss Laury felt she could not bear that.

'I am only the housekeeper', she said. 'This is a shooting-lodge belonging to a great Angrian proprietor'.

'Who?' asked the lady, who was not to be put off by indirect answers.

Again Miss Laury hesitated. For her life she could not have said 'His Grace the Duke of Zamorna'. She replied hastily, 'A gentleman of Western extraction, a distant branch of the great Pakenhams, so at least the family records say, but they have been long naturalised in the East'.

'I never heard of them', replied the lady. 'Pakenham! that is not an Angrian name?'

'Perhaps, madam, you are not particularly acquainted with this part of the country?'

'I know Hawkscliffe', said the lady, 'and your house is on the very borders, within the royal liberties, is it not?'

'Yes, madam, it stood there before the Great Duke bought up the forest-manor, and his Majesty allowed my master to retain this lodge and the privilege of sporting in the chase'

'Well, and you are Mr. Pakenham's housekeeper?'

'Yes, madam.'

The lady surveyed Miss Laury with another furtive side-glance of her large majestic eyes. Those eyes lingered upon diamond earrings, the bandeau of brilliants that flashed from between the clusters of raven curls, then passed over the sweet face, the exquisite figure of the young housekeeper, and finally were reverted to the wall with an expression that spoke volumes.

Miss Laury could have torn the dazzling pendants from her ears. She was bitterly stung. 'Everybody knows me', she said to herself. '“Mistress”, I suppose, is branded on my brow'.

In her turn she gazed on her guest. The lady was but a young creature, though so high and commanding in her demeanour. She had very small and feminine features, handsome eyes, a neck of delicate curve, and fair, graceful little snowy aristocratic hands, and sandalled feet to match. It would have been difficult to tell her rank by her dress. None of those dazzling witnesses appeared which had betrayed Miss Laury. Any gentleman's wife might have worn the gown of dark-blue silk, the tinted gloves of Parisian kid, and the fairy sandals of black satin in which she was attired.

'May I have a room to myself?' she asked, again turning her eyes with something like a smile toward Miss Laury.

'Certainly, madam, I wish to make you comfortable. Can you walk upstairs?'

'Oh, yes!'

She rose from the couch, and, leaning on Miss Laury's offered arm in a way that showed she had been used to that sort of support, they both glided from the room. Having seen her fair but somewhat haughty guest carefully laid on a stately crimson bed in a quiet and spacious chamber, having seen her head sink (with all her curls) onto the pillow of down, her large shy eyes close under their smooth eyelids, and her little slender hands fold on her breast in an attitude of perfect repose, Miss Laury prepared to leave her.

'Come back a moment', she said. She was obeyed – there was something in the tone of her voice which exacted obedience. 'I don't know who you are', she said, 'but I am very much obliged to you for your kindness. If my manners are displeasing, forgive me. I mean no incivility. I suppose you will wish to know my name: it is Mrs. Irving. My husband is a minister in the northern kirk; I come from Sneachiesland. Now you may go!'

Miss Laury did go. Mrs Irving had testified incredulity respecting her story, and now she reciprocated that incredulity. Both ladies were lost in their own mystification.

Five o'clock now struck. It was nearly dark. A servant with a taper was lighting up the chandeliers in the large dining room, where a table spread for dinner received the kindling lamplight upon a starry from a splendid sideboard, all arranged in readiness to receive the great, the expected guest.

Tolerably punctual in keeping an appointment when he means to keep it at all, Zamorna entered the house as the fairy-like voice of a musical clock in the passage struck out its symphony to the pendulum. The opening of the front door, a bitter rush of the night-wind, and then the sudden close and the step advancing forwards were the signals of his arrival.

Miss Laury was in the dining room looking round and giving the last touch to all things. She just met her master as she entered. His cold lip pressed to her forehead and his colder hand clasping hers brought the sensation which it was her custom of weeks and months to wait for, and to consider, when attained, as the ample recompense for all delay, all toil, all suffering.

'I am frozen, Mina', said he. 'I came on horseback for the last four miles, and the night is like Canada'.

Chafing his icy hand to animation between her own warm, supple palms, she answered by the speechless but expressive look of joy, satisfaction, idolatry, which filled and overflowed her eyes.

'What can I do for you, my lord?' were her first words as he stood by the fire rubbing his hands cheerily over the blaze. He laughed.

'Put your arms round my neck, Mina, and kiss my cheek as warm and blooming as your own.'

If Mina Laury had been Mina Wellesley she would have done so, and it gave her a pang to resist the impulse that urged her to take him at his word, but she put it by and only diffidently drew near the armchair into which he had now thrown himself and began to smooth and separate the curls which matted on his temples. She noticed as the first smile of salutation subsided a gloom succeeded on her master's brow, which, however he spoke or laughed, afterwards, remained a settled characteristic of his countenance.

'What visitors are in the house?' he asked; 'I saw the groom rubbing down four black horses before the stables as I came in. They are not of the Hawkscliffe stud, I think?'

'No, my lord. A carriage was overturned at the lawn gates about an hour since, and, as the lady who was in it was taken out insensible, I ordered her to be brought up here and her servants accommodated for the night'.

'And do you know who the lady is?' continued his Grace, 'The horses are good – first rate'.

'She says her name is Mrs Irving, and that she is the wife of a Presbyterian minister in the north, but –'

'You hardly believe her?' interrupted the Duke.

'No', returned Miss Laury, 'I must say I took her for a lady of rank. She has something highly aristocratic about her manners and aspect, and she appeared to know a good deal about Angria'.

'What is she like?' asked Zamorna. 'Young or old, handsome or ugly?'

'She is young, slender, not so tall as I am, and, I should say, rather elegant than handsome, very pale, cold in her demeanour. She has a small mouth and chin, and a fair neck.'

'Humph! A trifle like Lady Stuartville', replied his Majesty. 'I should not wonder if it is the Countess, but I'll know. Perhaps you did not say to whom the house belonged, Mina?'

'I said', replied Mina, smiling, 'that the owner of the house was a great Angrian proprietor, a lineal descendant of the Western Pakenhams, and that I was his housekeeper'.

'Very good! She would not believe you. You look like an Angrian country gentleman's Dolly! Give me your hand, my girl. You are not as old as I am.'

'Yes, my lord Duke, I was born on the same day, an hour after your Grace'.

'So I have heard, but it must be a mistake. You don't look twenty, and I am twenty-five. My beautiful Western – what eyes! Look at me, Mina, straight, and don't blush'.

Mina tried to look but she could not do it without blushing. She coloured to the temples.

'Pshaw' said his Grace, pushing her away. 'Pretending to be modest! My acquaintance of ten years cannot meet my eyes unshrinkingly. Have you lost that ring I once gave you, Mina?'

'Whar ring, my lord? You have given me many'

‘That which I said had the essence of your whole heart and mind engraven in the stone as a motto’.

‘Fidelity?’ asked Miss Laury, and she held out her hand with a graven emerald on the forefinger.

‘Right’ was the reply; ‘It is your motto still?’ And with one of his hungry jealous glances, he seemed trying to read conscience. Miss Laury at once saw the late transactions were not a secret confined between herself and Lord Hartford. She saw His Grace was unhinged and strongly inclined to be savage. She stood and watched him with a sad fearful gaze.

‘Well’, she said, turning away after a long pause, ‘if your Grace is angry with me I’ve very little to care about in this world.’

The entrance of the servants with the dinner prevented Zamorna’s answer. As he took his place at the head of the table, he said to the man who stood behind him: ‘Give Mr Pakenham’s compliments to Mrs Irving and say that he will be happy to see her at his table if she will honour him so far as to be present there’.

The footman vanished. He returned in five minutes.

‘Mrs Irving is too much tired to avail herself of Mr Pakenham’s kind invitation at present, but she will be happy to join him at tea’.

‘Very well’, said Zamorna, then looking round, ‘where is Miss Laury?’

Mina was in the act of gliding from the room, but she stopped mechanically at his call.

‘Am i to dine alone?’ he asked.

‘Does your Grace wish me to attend you?’

He answered by rising and leading her to her seat. He then resumed his own and dinner commenced. It was not till after the cloth was withdrawn and the servants had retired that the Duke, whilst he sipped his single glass of champagne, recommenced the conversation he had before so unpleasantly entered upon.

‘Come here, my girl’, he said, drawing a chair close to his side.

Mina never delayed, never hesitated, through bashfulness or any other feeling, to comply with his orders.

‘Now’, he continued, leaning his head towards her and placing his hand on her shoulder, ‘are you happy, Mina? Do you want anything?’

‘Nothing, my lord’.

She spoke truly; all that was capable of yielding her happiness on this side of Eternity was at that moment within her reach. The room was full of calm. The lamps burnt as if they were listening. The fire sent up no flickering flame, but diffused a broad, still, glowing light over all the spacious saloon. Zamorna touched her. His form and features filled her eye, his voice her ear, his presence her whole heart. She was soothed to perfect happiness.

‘My Fidelity!’ pursued that musical voice. ‘If thou hast any favour to ask, now is the time. I’m all concession, as sweet as honey, as yielding as a lady’s glove. Come, Esther, what is thy petition? And thy request, even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be granted!’

‘Nothing’, again murmured Miss Laury. ‘oh, my lord, nothing. What can I want?’

‘Nothing’, he repeated. ‘What? No reward for ten years of faith and love and devotion; no reward for the companionship in six months’ exile; no recompense to the little hand that has so often smoothed my pillow in sickness, to the sweet lips that have many a time in cool and dewy health been pressed to a brow of fever, none to the dark Milesian eyes that once grew dim with watching through endless nights by my couch of delirium? Need I speak of the sweetness and fortitude that cheered sufferings known only to thee and me, Mina? Of the devotion that gave me bread when you wert dying with hunger – and scarcely more than a year since? For all this, and much more, must there be no reward?’

‘I have had it’, said Miss Laury. ‘I have it now’.

‘But’, continued the Duke, ‘what if I have devised something worthy of your acceptance? Look up now and listen to me’.

She did look up, but she speedily looked down again. Her master’s eye was insupportable. It burnt absolutely with infernal fire. ‘What is he going to say?’ murmured Miss Laury to herself. She trembled.

‘I say, love’, pursued the individual, drawing her a little closer to him, ‘I will give you as a reward a husband, don’t start now! – and that husband shall be a nobleman, and that nobleman is called Lord Hartford! Now, madam, stand up and let me look at you!’

He opened his arms, and Miss Laury sprang erect like a loosened bow.

‘Your Grace is anticipated’, she said. ‘That offer has been made me before. Lord Hartford did it himself three days ago’.

‘And what did you say, madam?’ Speak the truth now; subterfuge won’t avail you’.

‘What did I say, Zamorna? I don’t know; it little signifies; you have rewarded me, my lord Duke! But I cannt bear this - I feel sick’.

With a deep, short sob, she turned white and fell close by the Duke, her head against his foot.

This was the first time in her life that Mina Laury had fainted, but strong health availed nothing against the deadly struggle which convulsed every feeling of her nature when she heard her master’s announcement. She believed him to be perfectly sincere. She thought he was tired of her and she could not stand it.

I suppose Zamorna’s first feeling when she fell was horror, and his next, I am tolerably certain, was intense gratification. People say I am not in earnest when I abuse him, or else I would here insert half a page of deserved vituperation, deserved and heartfelt. As it is I will merely relate his conduct without note or comment.

He took a wax taper from the table and held it over Miss Laury. Here could be no dissimulation. She was white as marble and still as stone. In truth, then, she did intensely love him with a devotion that left no room in her thoughts for one shadow of an alien image. Do not think, reader, that Zamorna meant to be so generous as to bestow Miss Laury on Lord Hartford. No; trust him! He was but testing in his usual way the attachment which a thousand proofs daily given ought long ago to have convinced him was undying.

While he yet gazed she began to recover. Her eyelids stirred, and then slowly dawned from beneath, the large dark orbs that scarcely met his before they filled to overflowing with sorrow. Not a gleam of anger! Not a whisper of reproach! Her lips and eyes spoke together no other language than the simple words,

‘I cannot leave you!’

She rose feebly and with effort. The Duke stretched out his hand to assist her. He held to her lips the scarcely tasted wineglass.

‘Mina’, he said. ‘are you collected enough to hear me?’

‘Yes, my lord’.

‘Then listen. I would much sooner give half – aye, the whole of my estate to Lord Hartfield, than yourself! What I said just now was only to try you’.

Miss Laury raised her eyes, sighed like one awaking from some hideous dream, but she could not speak.

‘Would I’, continued the Duke, ‘would I resign the possession of my first love to any hands but my own? I would far rather see her in her coffin; and I would lay you there as still, as white, and much more lifeless than you were stretched just now at my feet before I would, for threat, for entreaty, for purchase, give to another a glance of your eye or a smile from your lip. I know you adore me now, Mina, for you could not feign that agitation, and therefore I will tell you what proof I gave yesterday of my regard for you: Hartford mentioned your name in my presence, and I revenged the profanation by a shot which sent him to his bed little better than a corpse’.

Miss Laury shuddered, but so dark and profound are the mysteries of human nature ever allying vice with virtue, that I fear this bloody proof of her master’s love brought to her heart more rapture than horror. She said not a word, for now Zamorna’s arms were again folded around her, and again he was soothing her to tranquillity by endearments and caresses that far away removed all thought of the world, all past pangs of shame, all cold doubts, all weariness, all heart-sickness resulting from hope long deferred. He had told her that she was his first love, and now she felt tempted to believe that she was likewise his only love. Strong-minded beyond her sex, active, energetic, and accomplished in all other points of view, here she was as weak as a child. She lost her identity; her life was swallowed up in that of another.

There came a knock at the door. Zamorna rose and opened it. His valet stood without.

‘Might I speak with your Grace in the ante-room?’ asked Monsieur Rosier in somewhat of a hurried tone. The Duke followed him out.

‘What do you want with me, sir? Anything the matter?’

‘Ahem!’ began Eugene, whose countenance expressed much more embarrassment than is the usual characteristic of his dark, sharp physiognomy. ‘Ahem! My lord Duke, rather a curious spot of work, a complete conjuror’s trick if your Grace will allow me to say so’.

‘What do you mean, sir?’

‘Sacré! I hardly know. I must confess I felt a trifle stupefied when I saw it.’

‘Saw what? Speak plainly, Rosier!’

‘How your Grace is to act I can’t imagine’, replied the valet, ‘though indeed I have seen your Majesty double wonderfully well when the case appeared to me extremely embarrassing, but this I really thought extra – I could not have dreamt!’

‘Speak to the point, Rosier, or –’ Zamorna lifted his hand.

‘Mort de ma vie’ exclaimed Eugene, ‘I will tell you Grace all I know. I was walking carelessly through the passage about ten minutes since when I heard a step on the stairs, a light step as if of a very small foot. I turned, and there was a lady coming down. My lord, she was a lady!’

‘Well, sir, did you know her?’

‘I think if my eyes were not bewitched I did. I stood in the shade screened by a pillar and she passed very near without observing me. I saw her distinctly, and may I be d — d this very moment if it was not –’

‘Who, sir?’

‘The Duchess!’

There was a pause which was closed by a clear and remarkable prolonged whistle from the Duke. He put both his hands into his pockets and took a leisurely turn through the room.

‘You are sure, Eugene?’ he asked. ‘I know you dare not tell me a lie in such a matter because you have a laudable and natural regard to your proper carcass! Aye, it’s true enough, I’ll be sworn. Mrs Irving, the wife of a minister of the North! A satirical hit at my royal self! By G — d ! pale fair neck, little mouth and chin! Very good! I wish that same little mouth and chin were about a hundred miles off. What can have brought her? Anxiety about her invaluable husband – could not bear any longer without him – obliged to set off to see what he was doing. It’s as well that turnspit Rosier told me, however. If she had entered the room unexpectedly above five minutes since – God! I should have had no resource but to tie her hand and foot. It would have killed her! What the d — I shall I do? Must not be angry; she can’t do with that sort of thing just now. Talk softly, reprove her gently, swear black and white to my having no connection with MR Pakenham’s housekeeper’.

Ceasing his soliloquy, the duke turned again to his valet.

‘What room did Her aGrace go into?’

‘The drawing room, my lord, she is in there now’.

‘Well, say nothing about it, Rosier – on pain of sudden death! Do you hear me, sir?’

Rosier laid his hand on his heart, and Zamorna left the room to commence the operations.

Softly unclosing the drawing room door, he perceived a lady by the hearth. Her back was towards him, but there could be no mistake. The whole turn of form, the style of dress, the curled auburn head: all were attributes but of one person – of his own unique, haughty, jealous little Duchess. He closed the door as noiselessly as he had opened it and stole forwards. Her attention was absorbed in something, a book she had picked up. As he stood unobserved behind her he could see that her eye rested on the fly-leaf, where was written in his own hand:

Holy St. Cyprian! Thy waters stray
With still and solemn tone:
And fast my bright hours pass away
And somewhat throws a shadow grey,
Even as twilight closes day,
Upon thy waters lone.

Farewell! If I might come again,
Young as I was and free,
And feel once more in every vein
The fire of that first passion reign
Which sorrow could not quench or pain,
I'd soon return to thee;
But while thy billows seek the main
That never more may be!

This was dated 'Mornington, 1829'.

The Duchess felt a hand press her shoulder and she looked up. The force of attraction had its usual results and she clung to what she saw.

'Adrian! Adrian!' was all her lips could utter.

'Mary! Mary!' replied the Duke, allowing her to hang about him: 'Pretty doings! What brought you here? Are you running away, eloping in my absence?'

'Adrian, why did you leave me? You said you would come back in a week, and it's eight days since. I could not bear any longer. I have never slept nor rested since you left me. Do come home!'

'So you actually have set off in search of a husband!' said Zamorna, laughing heartily, 'and been overturned and obliged to take shelter in Pakenham' shooting-box!'

'Why are you here, Adrian?' inquired the Duchess who was far too much in earnest to join in his laugh. 'Who is Pakenham? And who is that person who calls herself his housekeeper? And why do you let anybody live so near Hawkscliffe without ever telling me?'

'I forgot to tell you' said his Grace. 'I've other things to think about when those bright hazel eyes are looking up at me! As to Pakenham, to tell you the truth he's a sort of left-hand cousin of your own, being natural son to the old Admiral, my uncle, in the South, and his housekeeper is his sister. Voilà tout. Kiss me now'.

The Duchess did kiss him, but it was with a heavy sigh; the cloud of jealous anxiety hung on her brow undissipated.

'Adrian, my heart aches still. Why have you been staying so long in Angria? O, you don't care for me! You have never thought how miserable I have been longing for your return, Adrian!' She stopped and cried.

'Mary, recollect yourself!' said His Grace. 'I cannot be always at your feet. You were not so weak when we were first married. You let me leave you often then without any jealous remonstrance'

'I did not know you as well at that time', said Mary, 'and if my mind is weakened, all its strength has gone away in tears and terrors for you. I am neither so handsome nor so cheerful as I once was, but you ought to forgive my decay because you have caused it.'

'Low spirits', returned Zamorna, 'looking on the dark side of matters! God bless me, the wicked is caught in his own net. I wish I could add 'yet shall I withal escape'. Mary, never again reproach yourself with loss of beauty till I give the hint first. Believe me now; in that and every other respect you are just what I wish you to be. You cannot fade any more than marble can – at least not in my eyes. And as for your devotion and tenderness, though I chide its excess sometimes, because it wastes and bleaches you almost to a shadow, yet it forms the very finest chain that binds me to you. Now cheer up! Tonight you shall go to Hawkscliffe; it is only five miles off. I cannot accompany you because I have some important business to transact with Pakenham which must not be deferred. Tomorrow, I will be at the castle before dawn. The carriage will be ready. I will put you in, myself beside you; off we go straight to Verdopolis, and there for the next three months I will tire you of my company, morning, noon, and night! Now what can I promise more? If you choose to be jealous of Henri Fernando, Baron of Etrei; or John, Duke of Fidenia; or the fair Earl of Richton, who, as God is my witness, has been the only companion of my present peregrinations, why, I can't help it. I must then take to soda-water and despair, or have myself petrified and carved into an Apollo for your dressing room. Lord! I get no credit with my virtue!'

By dint of lies and laughter the individual at last succeeded in getting all things settled to his mind.

The Duchess went to Hawkscliffe that night; and, keeping his promise for once, he accompanied her to Verdopolis next morning.

Lord Hartford still lies between life and death. His passion is neither weakened by pain, piqued by rejection, nor cooled by absence. On the iron nerves of the man are graven an impression which nothing can efface. Warner curses him; Richton deploras.

For a long space of time, good bye, reader! I have done my best to please you; and though I know that through feebleness, dullness, and iteration my work terminates rather in failure than triumph, yet you are sure to forgive, for I have done my best.

C. Brontë

Haworth, January 17th, 1838

STANCLIFFE'S HOTEL



CHAPTER 1

Charles Townshend pays a visit to Louisa Dance's house, and finds Macara Lofly under the influence of opium

"AMEN!" Such was the sound, given in a short shout, which closed the evening service at Ebenezer Chapel. Mr Bromley rose from his knees. He had wrestled hard, and the sweat of his pious labours shone like oil upon his forehead. Fetching a deep breath and passing his handkerchief over his damp brow, the apostle sank back in his seat. Then, extending both brawny arms and resting them on the sides of the pulpit, with the yellow-spotted handkerchief dependent from one hand, he sat and watched the evacuation of the crowded galleries.

"How oppressively hot the chapel has been to-night," said a soft voice to me, and a bonnet, bending forward, waved its ribbons against my face.

"Aye, in two senses," was my answer. "Literally, as to atmosphere, and figuratively, as to zeal. Our brother has exercised [conducted ther service; expounded scripture (obsolete)] with freedom, madam."

"Nonsense, Charles! I never can get into this slang! But come, the crowd is lessening at the gallery-door. I think we shall be able to make our way through it now, and I do long to get a breath of fresh air. Give me my shawl, Charles."

The lady rose, and, while I carefully enveloped her in the shawl and boa ["a snake-like coil of fur or feathers worn by women about the neck" (*OED*). The earliest usage in this sense cited in the *OED* is 1936; CB was clearly familiar with the latest fashions] which were to protect her from the night-air, she said, smiling persuasively, "You will escort me to my villa and sup with me on a radish and an egg." I answered by pressing the white hand over which she was just drawing a glove of French kid. She passed that hand through my arm and we left the gallery together.

A perfectly still and starlight night welcomed us as we quitted the steam and torches of the chapel. Threading our way quickly through the dispersing crowd at the door, we entered a well-known and oft-trod way, which in half an hour brought us from among the lighted shops and busy streets of our quartier to the deep shade and — at this hour — the unbroken retirement of the vale.

"Charles," said my fair companion in her usual voice, half a whisper, half a murmur. "Charles, what a sweet night — a premature summer night! It only wants the moon to make it perfect — then I could see my villa. Those stars are not close enough to bring out the white front fully from its laurels. And yet I do see a light glittering there. Is it not from my drawing-room window?"

"Probably," was my answer, and I said no more. Her ladyship's softness is at times too surfeiting, more especially when she approaches the brink of the sentimental.

"Charles," she pursued, in no wise abashed by my coolness. "How many fond recollections come on us at such a time as this! Where do you think my thoughts always stray on a summer night? What image do you think 'a cloudless clime and starry skies' always suggests?"

"Perhaps," said I, "that of the most noble Richard, Marquis of Wellesley, as you last saw him, reposing in gouty chair and stool, with eyelids gently closed by the influence of the pious libations in claret with which he has concluded the dinner of rice-curry, devilled turkey and guava."

Louisa, instead of being offended, laughed with silver sound. "You are partly right," said she. "The figure you have described does indeed form a portion of my recollections. Now, will you finish the picture, or shall I do it in your stead?"

"I resign the pencil into hands better qualified for its management," rejoined I.

"Well, then, listen," continued the Marchioness. "Removed from the easy chair and cushioned foot-stool and from the slumbering occupant thereof, imagine a harp - that very harp which stands now in my boudoir. Imagine a woman, seated by it. I need not describe her: it is myself. She is not playing. She is listening to one who leans on her instrument and whispers as softly as the wind now whispers in my acacias."

"Hem!" said I. "Is the figure that of a bald elderly gentleman?"

Louisa sighed her affirmative.

"By the bye," continued I. "It is constantly reported that he has taken to —"

"What?" interrupted the Marchioness. "Not proof spirits, I hope! Watered Hollands I know scarcely satisfied him."

"No, madam, repress your fears. I was alluding merely to his dress. The pantaloons are gone: he sports white tights and silks."

Low as the whisper was in which I communicated these stunning tidings, it thrilled along Louisa's nerves to her heart. During the pause which followed, I waited in breathless expectation for the effect. It came at last. Tittering faintly, she exclaimed, "You don't say so! Lord! how odd! But after all, I think it's judicious, you know. Nothing can exhibit more perfect symmetry than his leg, and then he does get older of course, and a change of costume was becoming advisable. Yet I should almost fear there would be too much deep shade and — at this hour — the unbroken retirement of the vale."

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"Have you heard from his lordship lately?" I asked.

"Oh no! About six months ago I had indeed one little note, but I gave it to Macara by mistake, and really I don't know what became of it afterwards."

"Did Macara express hot sentiment of incipient jealousy on thus accidentally learning that you had not entirely dropped all correspondence with the noble Earl?"

"Yes. He said he thought the note was very civilly expressed, and wished me to answer it in terms equally polite."

"Good! And you did so?"

"Of course. I penned an elegant billet on a sheet of rose-tinted note-paper, and sealed it with a pretty green seal bearing the device of twin hearts consumed by the same flame. Some misunderstanding must have occurred, though, for in two or three days afterwards I received it back unopened and carefully enclosed in a cover. The direction was not in his lordship's hand-writing: Macara told me he thought it was the Countess's."

"Do you know Selden House, where his lordship now resides?" I asked.

"Ah yes! Soon after I was married I remember passing it while on a bridal excursion to Rossland [Ross's Land, the kingdom founded by Captain John Ross, Anne Brontë's principal character in the *Young Men's Play*] with the old Marquis. We took lunch there, indeed, for Colonel Selden (at that time the owner of it) was a friend of my venerable bridegroom's. Talking of those times reminds me of a mistake everybody was sure to make at the hotels and private houses etc. where we stopped. I was universally taken for Lord Wellesley's daughter. Colonel Selden in particular persisted in calling me Lady Julia."

"He was a fine-looking man, not so old as my illustrious spouse by at least twenty years. I asked Dance, who accompanied us on that tour, why he had not chosen for me such a partner as the gallant Colonel. He answered me by the sourest look I ever saw."

"Well," said I, interrupting her ladyship's reminiscences. "Here we are at your villa. Goodnight. I cannot sup with you this evening: I am engaged."

"Nay, Charles," returned she, retaining the hand I would have withdrawn from hers. "Do come in! It is so long since I have had the pleasure of a quiet tête à tête with you."

I persisted for some time in my refusal; but at length yielding to the smile and the soft tone of entreaty I gave up the point, and followed the Marchioness in.

On entering her ladyship's parlour, we found the candles lighted and a supper-tray placed ready for us on the table. By the hearth, alone, Lord Macara Lofty was seated. His hand, drooping over the arm-chair, held two open letters: his eyes were fixed on the fire — as seemed, in thought. Louisa roused him. I could not help being struck by the languid gaze with which he turned his eyes upon her as she bent over him. There was vacancy in his aspect, and dreamy stupor.

"Are we late from chapel?" said she. "Bromley's last prayer seemed interminably long."

"Rather, I should think," was the Viscount's answer. "Rather, a trifle or so — late, you said? O ah! to be sure. I have been sitting with you two hours, have I not Louisa? — just dusk when I walked up the valley — late! certainly —"

This not particularly intelligible reply was given in the tone and with the manner of a man just startled from a heavy slumber, and yet the noble viscount had evidently been wide awake when we entered the room. Having delivered the speech above mentioned, he ceased to notice the Marchioness, and relapsed as if involuntarily into his former position and look.

"Won't you take some supper?" she inquired.

No answer. She repeated the question.

"G-d, no," he said hastily, as if annoyed at interruption, his countenance at the same time wearing a rapt expression, as if every faculty were spell-bound in some absorbing train of thought. The Marchioness turned from him with a grimace. She nodded at me and whispered, "Learned men now and then have very strange vagaries."

Not at all discomposed by his strange conduct, she proceeded quietly to remove her bonnet, shawl and boa; and having thrown them over the back of a sofa, she passed her fingers through her hair, and shaking aside the loose ringlets into which it was thus parted,

turned towards the mirror a face by no means youthful, by no means blooming, by no means regularly beautiful — but which yet had been able, by the aid of that long chiselled nose, those soft and sleepy eyes, and that bland smile always hovering round the deceitful lips, to captivate the greatest man of his age.

“Come,” she said, gliding towards the table. “Take a sandwich, Charles, and give me a wing of that chicken. We can amuse each other till Macara thinks proper to come round and behave like a sensible Christian.”

I did not, reader, ask what was the matter with Macara, for I had a very good guess myself as to the cause and origin of that profound fit of meditation in which his lordship now sat entranced. I fell forthwith to the discussion of the sandwiches and chicken, which the Marchioness dispensed to me with liberal hand. She also sat, and, as we sipped wine together, her soft eyes looking over the brim of the glass expressed far more easy enjoyment of the good things given her for her use than perplexing concern for the singular quandary in which her *cher ami* sat speechless and motionless by the hearth. Meantime, the ecstatic smiles which had, every now and then, kindled Macara’s eye and passed like sunshine over his countenance began to recur with fainter effect and at longer intervals. The almost sensual look of intense gratification and absorption gave place to an air of fatigue. Our voices seemed recalling him to recollection. He stirred in his seat, then rose, and with an uncertain step began to pace the room. His eye — heavy still, and filmy — caught mine.

“Ho! is that you?” he said in a peculiar voice, which scarcely seemed under the speaker’s command. “Hardly knew you were in the room — and Louisa too I declare! Well, I must have been adipose [fat. Apparently this is a comic substitution for “comatose”]: Macara si not yet in command of language]. And what has Bromley said tonight? You were at chapel, somebody told me a while since — at least I think so, but it may be all fancy! I daresay you’ll think me in an extraordinary mood to-night, but I’ll explain directly — as soon as I get sufficiently collected.”

With an unsteady hand he poured out a goblet of water, drank part, and, dipping his fingers in, cooled with the remainder his forehead and temples. “My head throbs,” said he. “I must not try this experiment often.” As he spoke, his hand shook so convulsively that he could hardly replace the glass on the table. Smiling grimly at this evidence of abused nerves, he continued, “Really, Townshend! Only mark that! And what do you think it is occasioned by?”

“Intoxication,” I said concisely. “And that of a very heathen kind. You were far better take to dry spirits at once, Macara, than do as you do.”

“Upon my conscience,” replied the Viscount, sitting down and striking the table with that same shaking hand. “I do believe, Townshend, you are in the right. I begin to find that this system of mine, rational as I thought it, is fraught with the most irresistible temptation.”

Really, reader, it is difficult to deal with a man like Macara, who has candour at will to screen even his weakest points from attack. However infamous may be the position in which he is surprised, he turns round without a blush, and instead of defending himself, by denying that matters are as appearances would warrant you to suppose, usually admits all the disgrace of his situation, and begins with metaphysical profundity to detail all the motives and secret springs of action which brought matters to the state in which you found them. According to this system of tactics the Viscount proceeded with his self-accusation.

“It was a fine evening, as you know,” said he, “and I thought I would take a stroll up the valley, just to alleviate those low spirits which had been oppressing me all day. Townshend, I dare say you do not know what it is to look at an unclouded sun, at pleasant fields and young woods crowding green and bright to the edge of a river, and from these fair objects to be unable to derive any feeling but such as is tinged with sadness. However, I am familiar with this state of mind — and as I passed through the wicket that shuts in Louisa’s lawn, and turning round paused in the green alley, and saw between the laurels the glittering red sky, clear as fire, which the sun had left far over the hills, I, Townshend, felt that, still and bright as the day was closing, fair as it promised to rise on the morrow, this summer loveliness was nothing to me — no.

“So I walked up to the house; I entered this room, wishing to find Louisa. She was not there, and when I inquired for her I was told she would not return for some hours. I sat down to wait. The dusk approached, and in that mood of mind I watched it slowly veiling every object, clothing every tree of the shrubbery, with such disguises as a haunted, a disturbed, a blackened imagination could suggest. Memory whispered to me that in former years I could have sat at such an hour, in such a scene; and from the rising moon, the darkening landscape on which I looked, the quiet little chamber where I sat, have gathered images all replete with bliss for the present, with softened happiness for the future. Was it so now? No, Mr Townshend; I was in a state of mind which I will not mock you by endeavouring to describe. But the gloom, the despair, became unendurable; dread forebodings rushed upon me, whose power I could not withstand. I felt myself on the brink of some hideous disaster and a vague influence ever and anon pushed me over, till clinging wildly to life and reason, I almost lost consciousness in the faintness of mortal terror.

“Now, Townshend, so suffering, how far did I err when I had resource to the sovereign specific which a simple narcotic drug offered me? I opened this little box, and, sir, I did not hesitate. No, I tasted. The change was wrought quickly. In five minutes I, who had been the most miserable wretch under that heaven, sat a rational, happy man, soothed to peace of mind, to rest of body, capable of creating sweet thoughts, of tasting bliss, of dropping those fetters of anguish which had restrained me, and floating away with light brain and soaring soul into the fairest regions imagination can disclose. Now, Townshend, I injured no fellow-creature by this: I did not even brutalize myself. Probably my life may be shortened by indulgence of this kind [the young Brontes would have been familiar with such descriptions of drug experiences. Thomas de Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* had appeared in 1822, and was much discussed and referred to thereafter in *Blackwood’s Magazine*] — but what of that? The eternal sleep will come sometime, and as well sooner as later.”

“I’ve no objection,” returned I, coolly. “Louisa, have you?”

“I can’t understand the pleasure of that opium,” said the Marchioness. “And as to low spirits, I often tell Macara that I think there must be a great deal of fancy in them.”

The Viscount gently sighed, and, dropping his hand on hers, said, as he softly pressed it with his wan fingers, “May you long think so, Louisa!”

Finding that his lordship was in much too sentimental a mood to serve my turn, I shortly after rose and took my leave. The

Marchioness attended me to the hall-door.

“Is he not frénétique, Charles?” said she. “What nonsense to make such a piece of work about low spirits! I declare he reminds me of Ashworth. He, poor man, after a few days of hard preaching and harder drinking used to say that he had a muttering devil at his side. He told Bromley so once, and Bromley believed him. Would you have done, Charles?”

“Implicitly, madam. Goodnight.”

CHAPTER 2

Charles Townshend decides to pay a visit to the country

I like the city. So long as winter lasts, it would be no easy task to entice me from its warm and crowded precincts. So long even as spring, with lingering chill, scatters her longer showers and fitful blinks of sunshine, I would cling to the theatre at night and the news-room [in the 1830s, a reading room set aside for the reading of newspapers] in the morning. But at last, I do confess, as June advances, and ushers in a long series of warm days, of soft sunsets and mellow moonlight evenings, I do begin to feel certain intuitive longings for an excursion, a jaunt out into the country, a sojourn somewhere far off, where there are woods, pastoral hills and bright pebbled becks.

This feeling came strong over me the other day, when, sitting in Grant's Coffee-House, I took up a fashionable paper whose columns teemed with such announcements as the following: Preparations are making at Roslyn castle, the seat of Lord St Clair in the North, for the reception of his Lordship's family and a party of illustrious visitors, who are invited to spend the summer quarter amidst the beautiful forest scenery with which that part of the St Clair estate abounds.

Prince Augustus of Fidena set out yesterday, accompanied by his tutor, for Northwood-Zara, whither the Duke and Duchess of Fidena are to follow in a few days.

Lord and Lady Stuartville leave town to-morrow. Their destination is Stuartville Park in Angria.

The Earl of Northangerland is still at Selden House. It is understood that his lordship expresses little interest in politics.

General Thornton and his lady took their departure for Girmington Hall last week. The General intends adding to the plantations on his already finely wooded property in Angria.

The Earl and Countess of Arundel are at their seat of Summerfield House, in the province of Arundel.

General and Mrs Grenville propose to spend the summer at Warner Hall, the residence of W.H. Warner Esqre, premier of Angria.

John Bellingham Esqre, banker, is rusticated at Goldthorpe Mowbray. The physicians have advised sea bathing for the perfect restoration of Mr Bellingham's health, which has suffered considerably from a severe attack of influenza.

The Marquis of Harlaw, with a party of friends, J. Billinger Esqre, Mr Macqueen etc., is enjoying a brief relaxation from state cares at Colonel Luckyman's country house, Catton Lodge.

Lord Charles and the young ladies Flower have joined their noble mother at Mowbray. Sigston's Hotel is engaged entirely for the use of Lady Richton and her household. Lord Charles Flower, who, as well as his sisters, is just recovering from the measles, continues under the care of Dr Morrison, the family physician. The noble ambassador himself is in the south.

From these paragraphs it was evident that the season was now completely over. No more assemblies at Flower House, no more select dinner-parties at the Fidena Palace. Closed were the saloons of Thornton Hotel, forsaken were the squares round Ellrington Hall and Wellesley House, void were the habitations of Castlereagh, darkened the tabernacles of Arundel! Whereas now, in remote woods, the chimneys of Girmington Hall sent out their blue smoke to give token that the old spot was peopled again; in remoter meads, the broad sashes of Summerfield House were thrown up, to admit the gale sweeping over those wide prairies into rooms with mirrors cleared and carpets spread and couches unswathed in holland. Every blind was withdrawn at Stuartville Park, every shutter opened, and the windows through crimson curtains looked boldly towards the green ascent [eminence (obsolete)] where Edwardston smiles upon its young plantations. The rooks were cawing at Warner Hall with cheerier sound than ever as, early on a summer morning, the Prime Minister of Angria, standing on his front-door steps, looked at the sun rising over his still grounds and deep woods and over the long, dark moors of Howard.

I could have grown poetical. I could have recalled more distant and softer scenes touched with the light of other years, hallowed by higher — because older — associations than the campaign of -33, the rebellion of -36. I might have asked how sunrise yet became the elms and the turret of Wood Church. But I restrained myself, and merely put the question, shall I have me out or not? And whither shall I direct my steps? To my old quarters at the Greyhound opposite Mowbray Vicarage? To my friend Tom Ingham's farm at the foot of Boulshill? To some acquaintances I have North awa' in the vicinity of Fidena? Or to a snug country lodging I know of in the south not far from my friend Billinger's paternal home? Time and chance shall decide me. I've cash sufficient for the excursion; I've just rounded off my nineteenth year and entered on my twentieth; I'm a neat figure, a competent scholar, a popular author, a gentleman and a man of the world. Who then shall restrain me? Shall I not wander at my own sweet will? *Allons*, reader, come, and we will pack the carpet-bag. Make out an inventory: Item - 4 shirts, 6 fronts, 4 pair cotton, 2 pair silk stockings, 1 pair morocco pumps, 1 dress satin waistcoat, 1 dress coat, 2 pair dress pantaloons, 1 pair nankeens [trousers made of a kind of cotton cloth], 1 brush and comb, 1 bottle macassar oil, 1 tooth-brush, box vegetable tooth-powder, 1 pot cream of roses, 1 case of razors (N.B. for show not use), two cakes of almond soap, 1 bottle eau de cologne, 1 bottle eau de mille fleurs, 1 pair curling-irons. C'est tout! I'm my own valet now! Reader, if you're ready, so am I. The coach is coming, hillo! Off at full speed to meet it!

CHAPTER 3

At Stancliffe's Hotel, amongst the commercial travelers

"Well, I think I shall have to stay at Zamorna all night. It's a delightful June evening."

So I soliloquized to myself, as, standing in the traveller's room at Stancliffe's Hotel, I from the window watched the umbrellas, cloaks, and mackintoshes which ever and anon traversed Thornton Street in Zamorna. It had been market-day, and the gigs of the clothiers, now homeward-bound, were bowling along the pavement in the teeth of the driving showers and fitful blasts in which the before-mentioned delightful June evening had thought proper to veil its close. Now and then a cavalcade of some half-dozen mounted manufacturers passed the window at full trot. These gentlemen had doubtless dined en comité at the Woolpack or the Stuart Arms, and the speed and lightness of their progress, the pleasing gaiety of their aspects, and the frequency of the laugh and jest in their ranks indicated pretty plainly that they were, one and all — to speak technically — market-fresh [slang for drunk, referring to "that dubious degree of sobriety with which farmers too commonly return home from market" (1841; *OED*)] Many of the gigs, too, shot past with a vengeable rapidity which warranted that occupants had duly laid in the stock of brandy and water. Wild and boisterous as the wind swept up the street and drove before it a heavy constant rain, these heroes, safe in the external shield of waterproof capes and the internal specific of no less waterproof cognac, dashed away towards the open Edwardston or Adrianopolitan roads, as if in defiance of the storm which was to meet them in fuller force when removed from the partial shelter of the city.

The traveller's room at Stancliffe's Hotel by no means exhibited the silence and solitude of a hermit's cell. Gentlemen in the soft and hard line [commercial travellers in different kinds of commodities] strode in and out incessantly from the trampled inn-passage, whose wet and miry floor plainly told the condition of the streets outside. Then there were loud calls for the waiters, incessant ringings of the weary bell, orders about sundry carpet-bags and portmanteaus, deliveries of divers wet great-coats and drenched pea-surtouts [stout overcoats made of course cloth] to be dried instantly at the kitchen-fire, expostulations about mysterious subjects unintelligible except to the affrighted waiter and the aggrieved complainant. One furious individual, whose gig drove up to the Hotel amidst the pelting of a wilder torrent of rain than had fallen in the course of the whole afternoon, entered the room with a dark and ominous aspect. As he was drawing off his three-caped great-coat, from which the water dripped in streams, something in the condition of the fire-place seemed to strike him with conscientious horror. He rushed to the door.

"Waiter! Waiter!! Waiter!!!" he exclaimed with the voice of a lion.

The waiter came. The person who had summoned him was a portly man and an apoplectic; his rage seemed at first to impede his utterance, but not for long. He opened forth:

"Look at that grate, sir! Do you call that comfort — tawdry rags of blue and yellow paper instead of a good fire?"

"It's June, sir," replied the waiter. "18th inst. We never put on fire in the low-rooms after May goes out."

"Damn you," said the bagman. "Light a fire directly, or I'll send for your master and give him a jobation [talking-to] to his face about it. Let me tell you, your people here at Stancliffe's get abominably careless. Such a blackguard dinner as I had here last circuit! But I promise you if you set me down to such another I'll put up at the Stuart Arms in future. Light a fire, sir, and take my coat. If you leave a wet thread on it I'll subtract it from the reckoning. Bring me some hot punch and oysters for supper, and mind the chambermaid airs my bed well. I'd damp sheets last time I slept here, I'll be d-ed if I had not."

Your Angrian commercial traveller is one of the greatest scamps in existence, much on a par with your Angrian newspaper editor. Anything more systematically unprincipled, more recklessly profligate than these men, taking them as a body, is not easy to conceive. Characters indicative of these vices were legibly written in the faces of the half-dozen gentlemen gathered on this stormy evening in the apartment to which I have introduced my readers. Conversation did not flag amongst them. Amidst the ringing of crushers and tumblers, such sentences were heard as the following:

"Brown, I say, you're lucky to have no further to go to-night!"

"Well, and so are you, an't you?"

"Me! I must push on ten miles further if it rain cats and dogs: I must be in Edwardston by nine to-night to meet one of our partners."

"Which of them: Culpeper or Hoskins?"

"Culpeper, ac-d cross-grained dog."

"Pretty weather, this, for June ain't it?" interpolated a young dandy with red curls and velvet waistcoat.

"Aye, as pretty as your phiz [face]," replied the furious man who had ordered the fire to be lit, and who was now sitting with both his feet on the fender, full in front of the few smoky coals which in obedience to his mandates had been piled together.

"I say, can you change me a bank-note?" asked one man with his chin shrouded in a white shawl.

"Bank of Angria or private bank?" said the person whom he had addressed.

"Private bank — of our own Amos Kirkwall and sons."

"I can change it with our pound notes — Edward Percy's and Steaton's: I got them at their warehouse this afternoon."

"I'd prefer these any day to sovereigns — less chance of their being counterfeit."

"Well, and how go politics to-day?" asked a smart traveller in a gold chain, slapping on the shoulder a studious individual deeply absorbed in the perusal of a newspaper.

"God knows!" was the answer. "I should not be much astonished to hear of the Prime Minister resigning."

"And he will if he does his duty," exclaimed a third person. "Have you seen the War Despatch for this morning? My word, their people do go it!"

"Manly, independent print, the War Despatch," answered the first speaker. "Delivers the sentiments of the nation at large. Curse it — who's to hinder us from asserting our rights? Aren't we all free-born Angrians?"

"The Rising Sun swears that Percy has tendered his resignation, and been solicited to withdraw it. What do you think of that?"

"That he had a capital opportunity of discharging with interest many a long bill of insults he has been storing up against the Czar

[the Duke of Zamorna] for these three years at least.”

“But I think it would hardly be like him to let such an opportunity pass, if it be so. Brandy and Water! He’ll serve them out next sessions, in style.”

“By G-d, that he will, and before next sessions too. A propos of that, they say some of the leaders in the War Despatch are penned by him.”

“Very likely; he’s a real trump-card. Do you deal with him?”

“No, our house is in the cutlery-line.”

“We do, or rather, we did a while since; but he screwed so hard in that last bargain about some casks of madder, and came down so prompt for payment at a time when ready money was rather scarce with us, that our senior partner swore upon the Gospels he’d burn his fingers in that oven no more.”

The furious man, who had hitherto sat silent, here turned from the fire which he had by this time coaxed into something like a blaze and growled sotto-voce: “Shall be happy to supply you, Mr Drake, with madder, indigo, logwood and barilla of all qualities on the most reasonable terms. Shall feel obliged if you will favour me with an order. May I put you down?” He drew out a pocket-book and unsheathed a pencil.

“Of what house?” asked Mr Drake.

“I do for Milnes, Duff & Stephenson, Dyers, Anvale,” answered the fire-eater [one fond of quarrelling].

“Humph!” rejoined Drake with a kind of sneer. “I’ve seen that firm mentioned somewhere.” He affected to ponder for a moment, then, snapping his fingers: “I have it! It was in the Gazette. Paid a second dividend, I think, a month ago — half-a-crown in the pound.”

The man of choler said nothing: he was flabbergasted. But he leaned back in his chair, and, lifting both feet from the fender, he deposited one on each hob. His favourite element, now burning clear and red, seemed to console him for every contre-temps.

“Drat it, the weather’s clearing!” suddenly ejaculated that gentleman who had declared his obligation to be at Edwardston by nine o’clock. He rushed out of the room and, having peremptorily ordered his gig, rushed back again; and having swallowed the contents of a capacious tumbler besought Dawson to help him on with his d-d mackintosh. Then, as he settled the collar about his neck, he bade an affectionate adieu to the said Dawson in the words:

“Go it old cock! Good bye! Judging by thy nose next circuit will use thee up.”

I saw him from the window mount his gig and flash down the still wet street like a comet.

In truth, the clouds for the first time that day were now beginning to separate. The rain had ceased; the wind likewise had subsided; and I think, if I could have seen the west, the sun, within a few minutes of its setting, was just shedding one parting smile over the Olympian [houses of the Angrian gentry are in the valley of the Olympian]. Several of the travellers now rose. There was a general ordering out of gigs and assuming of coats and cloaks. In a few minutes the room was cleared, with the exception of two or three whose intention it was to take up their quarters at Stancliffe’s for the night. While these discussed professional subjects, I maintained my station at the window, watching the passengers whom the gleam of sunshine had called out at the close of a rainy day.

In particular, I marked the movements of a pretty woman who seemed waiting for someone at the door of a splendid mercer’s shop opposite. Drawing aside the green blind, I tried to catch her eye, displaying a gold snuff-box under pretence of taking a pinch, and by the same action exhibiting two or three flashy rings with which my white aristocratic hand was adorned. Her eye was caught by the glitter. She looked at me from amongst a profusion of curls, glossy and silky though of the genuine Angrian hue [red]. From me her glance reverted to her own green silk frock and pretty sandalled feet. I fancied she smiled. Whether she did or not, I certainly returned the compliment by a most seductive grin. She blushed. Encouraged by this sign of sympathy, I kissed my hand to her. She giggled, and retreated into the shop. While I was vainly endeavouring to trace her figure, of which no more than the dim outline was visible through the gloom of the interior, increased by waving streamers of silk and print pendant to the shop door, someone touched my arm. I turned. It was a waiter.

“Sir, you are wanted, if you please.”

“Who wants me?”

“A gentleman upstairs. Came this afternoon. Dined here. I’ve just carried in the wine, and he desired me to tell the young gentleman in the traveller’s room who wore a dark frock-coat and white jeans [trousers of coarse cotton cloth] that he would be happy to have the pleasure of his company for the evening.”

“Do you know who he is?” I asked.

“I’ve not heard his name, sir, but he came in his own carriage — a genteel barouche. A military looking person. I should fancy he may be an officer in the army.”

“Well,” said I, “show me up to his apartment”, and as the slippered waiter glided before me I followed with some little curiosity to see who the owner of the genteel barouche might be. Not that there was anything at all strange in the circumstance, for Stancliffe’s, being the head hotel in Zamorna, every day received aristocratic visitants within its walls. The Czar himself usually changed horses here in his journeys to and from his capital.

CHAPTER 4

Charles Townshend remembers the trial of Zamorna, after his defeat at Edwardston, and meets an old friend

Traversing the inn-passage — wetter and dirtier than ever, and all in tumult for the evening Verdopolitan-coach had just come in and the passengers were calling for supper and beds and rooms and at the same time rushing wildly after their luggage — traversing, I say, this rich *melée*, in the course of which transit I nearly ran over a lady and a little girl and was in requital called a rude scoundrel by their companion, a big fellow in mustachios — traversing, I once more repeat, this area wherein a woman with a child in her arms — dripping wet, for she had ridden on the outside of the coach — came against me full drive, I at length, after turning the angle of second long passage and passing through a pair of large folding doors, found myself in another region.

It was a hall with rooms about it, green mats at every door, a lamp in the centre, a broad staircase ascending to a gallery above, which ran round three sides of the hall, leaving space in the fourth for a great arched window. All here was clean, quiet, stately. This was the new part of the hotel, which had been erected since the year of independence. Before that time, Stancliffe's was but a black-looking old public, whose best apartment was not more handsomely furnished than its present travellers' room. As I ascended the staircase, chancing to look through the window I got a full and noble view of that new court-house which, rising upon its solid basement, so majestically fronts the first inn in Zamorna. There it was that, after the disastrous day of Edwardston, Jeremiah Simpson opened his court martial; there, on such an evening as this. At this very hour, when twilight was sealing sunset, a turbaned figure, with furred robes like a sultan and shawl streaming from his waist, had mounted those steps, and, while all the wide and long street beneath him was a sea of heads and a hell of strange cries, had shouted: "Soldiers, bring on the prisoner!"

Then, breaking through the crowd, trampling down young and old, Julian Gordon's troopers burst on amidst the boom of Quashia's gongs and the yell of Medina's kettle-drums. A gun mounted on the court-house was discharged down on the heads of the mob, as was afterwards sworn before the House of Peers. Through the smoke the prisoner could hardly be seen, but his head was bare, his hands bound; that court-house received him, and the door was barred on the mob.

"This is the room, sir," said the waiter, throwing open a door in the middle of the gallery, and admitting me to a large apartment whose style of decoration, had I been a novice in such matters, would have burst upon me with dazzling force. It was as elegant in finish, as splendid in effect, as a saloon in any nobleman's house. The windows were large, lofty and clear; the curtains were of silk that draperied them, of crimson silk, imparting to everything a rosy hue. The carpet was soft and rich, exhibiting groups of brilliant flowers. The mantelpiece was crowned with classical ornaments — small but exquisite figures in marble, vases as white as snow, protected from soil by glass bells inverted over them, silver lamps, and, in the centre, a foreign time-piece.

Above all these sloped a picture, the only one in the room: an Angrian peer in his robes, really a fine fellow. At first I did not recognize the face, as the costume was so unusual; but by degrees I acknowledged a dashing likeness to the most noble Frederick Stuart, Earl of Stuartville and Viscount Castlereagh, Lord Lieutenant of the Province of Zamorna. "Really," thought I, as I took in the tout ensemble of the room, "These Angrians do lavish the blunt [slang for ready money] — hotels like palaces, palaces like Genii dreams [in Glass Town, the creators of Angria were the four Chief Genii]. It's to be hoped there's cash to answer the paper-money, that's all." At a table covered with decanters and silver fruit-baskets sat my unknown friend, the owner of the genteel conveyance. The waiter having retired, closing the door after him, I advanced.

CHAPTER 5

William Percy tells Charles Townshend of his exploits

It being somewhat dusk, and the gentleman's face being turned away from the glow of a ruddy fire, I did not at first glance hit his identity. However, I said, "How do you do, sir? Glad to see you."

"Pretty well, thank you," returned he, and slowly rising, he tenderly took his coat-tails under the protection of his arms, and standing on the rug presented his back to the before-mentioned ruddy fire.

"O it's you, is it!" I ejaculated; for his face was now obvious enough. "How the devil did you know that I was here?"

"What the devil brought you here?" he asked.

"Why the devil do you wish to know?" I rejoined.

"How the devil can I tell?" he replied.

Here, our wits being mutually exhausted by these brilliant sallies, I took a momentary reprieve in laughter. Then my friend began again.

"In God's name, take a chair."

"In Christ's name, I will."

"For the love of Heaven, let me fill you a bumper."

"For the fear of Hell, leave no heel-tap [the liquor left at the bottom of the glass after drinking]."

"I adjure you by the gospels, tell me if it's good wine."

"I swear upon the Koran, I've tasted better."

"By the miracle of Cana, you lie."

"By the miracle of Moses, I do not."

"According to your oaths, sir, I should take you to be circumcised."

"According to yours, I should scarce think you were baptized."

"The Christian ordinance came not upon me."

"The Mahometan rite I have eschewed."

"Thou then art an unchristened Heathen."

"And thou an infidel Giaour [Islamic term of abuse for Christians, and title of a poem by Lord Byron, 1813]."

"Pass the bottle, lad," said my friend, resuming his seat and grasping the decanter with emphasis. He and I filled our glasses, and then we looked at each other. A third person, I think, would have observed something similar about us. We were both young, both thin, both sallow and light-haired and blue-eyed, both carefully and somewhat foppishly dressed, with small feet set off by a slender chaussure and white hands garnished with massive rings.

My friend, however, was considerably taller than I, and had besides more of the air military. His head was differently set upon his shoulders. He had incipient light brown mustaches and some growth of whisker; he threw out his chest too and sported a length of limb terminating in boot and spur. His complexion, originally fair almost to delicacy, appeared to have seen service, for it was like my own much tanned, freckled and yellowed to a bilious hue with the sun. He wore a blue dress-coat with velvet collar, velvet waistcoat and charming white tights: I endured [put on as a garment (OED); the word also has the sense of "invest or endow with a spiritual gift", and carries a mock-heroic resonance here; frock; frock-coat] a well-made green frock and light summer jeans. Now, reader, have you got us before you?

The young officer, resting his temples on his hand and pensively filling a tall champagne glass, renewed the conversation.

"You'll be surprised to see me here, I daresay, aren't you?"

"Why yes; I thought you were at Gazemba or Dongola, or Bonowen or Socatoo, or some such barbarian station, setting slot-hounds [sleuth-hounds] on negro-tracks, and sleeping like Moses among the flags on some river-side."

"Well, Townshend," said he. "Your description exactly answers to the sort of life I have led for the last six months."

"And are you stalled of it?" I asked.

"Stalled, man! think of the honour! Have you not seen in every newspaper: 'The exertions of the 10th Hussars in the east under their Colonel Sir William Percy continue unabated. The efforts made by that Gallant Officer to extirpate the savages are beyond all praise. Scarce a day passes but five or six are hung under the walls of Dongola'? Then again: 'A signal instance of vengeance was exhibited at Katagoom last week, by order of Sir William Percy.'

A soldier had been missing some days from his regiment stationed at that place. His remains were at length found in a neighbouring jungle, hideously mangled, and displaying all the frightful mutilation of Negro slaughter. Sir William instantly ordered out two of the fiercest and keenest hounds in his leashes. They tracked up the murderers in a few hours. When seized, the blood-stained wretches were sunk up to the neck in the deep mire of a carr-brake²⁶. Sir William had them shot through the head where they stood, and their bodies merged in the filth which afforded them such a suitable sepulchre.' Eh, Townshend? is not that the strain?"

"Exactly so. But now Colonel, since you were so honourably occupied, why do I now find you so far from the seat of your glorious toil?"

"Really, Townshend, how can you be so unreasonable? The tenth Hussars — all Gods as they are, or God-like men, which is better — can't stand the sun of those deserts and the malaria of those marshes for ever. It has therefore pleased our gracious monarch to command a recall; that is, not by his own sacred mouth, but through the medium of W.H. Warner Esqre, our trusty and well-beloved councillor, who delivered his instructions to our General-in-Chief and Commander of the Forts, Henri Fernando di Enara, by whom they were transmitted to your humble servant."

"And with alacrity you jumped at the reprieve."

"Jumped at it? No; I perused the despatch with, I believe, my wonted coolness - awed, of course, by the sublime appellation of our

Lord the King, in whose name it was penned — but otherwise I sweat not, neither did I swoon. It is not for us poor subalterns to feel either joy or grief, satisfaction or disappointment.”

“Well, Colonel, where are you going now?”

“Lord, Mr Townshend, don’t be in such a hurry! Let one have a minute’s time for reflection! I’ve hardly yet got over the anguish of soul that came upon me at Gazemba.”

“How? On what account?”

“All a sense of my own insignificance — a humbling to the dust, as it were. That organ of veneration is so predominant in my cranium, it will be the death of me some day. You know, being to go to Adrianopolis, it was needful to pass through Gazemba, and being at Gazemba, it was onerous to wait upon our Commander of the Forts at his pretty little villa there. So, having donned the regimentals over a check shirt for the more grace (it would have been presumptuous to appear in cambric while his Highness sported huckaback), I made my way to the domicile. Signor Fernando must be a man of some nerves to endure about his person such fellows as form the household of that garrison. The dirtiest dregs of a convict hulk would scarce turn out such another muster. Parricides, matricides, fratricides, sororicides, stabbers in the dark, blackguard bullies of hells, scoundrel suborners of false testimony: of these materials has he formed the domestic establishment of his country-seat. A forger in the disguise of a porter opened the door for me; a cut-purse wearing a footman’s epaulettes shewed me to an ante-room; there I was received by one bearing a steward’s wand who had been thrice convicted of arson; he gave my name to a Mr Secretary Gordon, who had visibly been hanged for murder but unfortunately cut down before the law had done its perfect work.

“Of course I sweat profusely by the time I had passed through this ordeal, and when at length Mr Gordon introduced me to a dismal little dungeon called a cabinet where sat Enara, my knees shook under me like aspen leaves. There was the great man in his usual attire of a gingham jacket and canvas trousers of more than Dutch capacity. Stock he disdained, and waistcoat: the most fastidious lady might have beheld with admiration that muscular chest and neck bristled with heroic hair. Between the commander’s lips breathed a cigar, and in one hand he held a smart box of the commodity, fresh as imported from the spicy islands where springs the fragrant weed. With head a little declined, and brow contracted in solicitude respecting the important choice, the illustrious General seemed, at the moment I entered, to be engaged in picking out another of the same. Mark the noble simplicity of a great mind stooping to the commonest employment of an ordinary shop-boy! Having made his election, he handed the Havannah to a person who stood beside him, and whom till now I had not perceived, ejaculating as he did so, ‘Damn it! I think that’ll be a good ‘un!’

“‘G-d, so it is!’ was his companion’s answer when, after a moment’s pause, he had tried the sweet Virginian. I looked now at this second speaker. Townshend, it was too much! At Enara’s chair back there stood a man in a shabby brown surtout, with his hands stuck in the hind pockets thereof, wearing a stiff stock, out of which projected a long and dark dried vinegar physiognomy shaded with grizzly whiskers and overshadowed with still more grizzly hair. The fellow was so ugly, at first sight I thought it must be a stranger. A second glance assured me that it was General Lord Hartford. What could I do? The blaze of patrician dignity quite overpowered me. However, I made shift to advance.

“‘How d’ye do, Sir William?’ said Enara. ‘Recalled, you find? I regret the necessity, which doubtless will be a great disappointment to you.’ I ventured to ask in what respect? He looked at me as if I had put the question in Greek. ‘As a man of honour, sir, I should suppose — but most probably you are consoling yourself under the disappointment by the prospect of a speedy return. We shall see, sir; I will speak to the Duke in your behalf. Your services have given me much satisfaction.’

“I bowed, of course, and then stood to hear what more was coming, but the General seemed to have said his say. Lord Hartford now grunted something unintelligible, though with the most dignified air possible, his under lip being scornfully protruded to support the cigar and his branded brow corrugated over his eyes with the sour malignant look of a fiend. He seemed to breathe asthmatically, I suppose in consequence of that wound he received last winter. Finding that there was no more talk to be had for love or money, I rose to go. In reply to my farewell genuflection Enara nodded sharply, and muttered a word or two about hoping to see me again soon and having a spot of special work cut out purposely for me. Hartford bent his stiff back with a stern haughty bow that made me feel strongly inclined to walk round behind him and trip up his heels.”

I laughed as Sir William closed his narration.

“Well, you do give it them properly, Colonel!” said I. “A set of pompous prigs! I like to hear them dished now and then. And how did you get on at Adrianopolis? I suppose you saw the premier?”

“Yes, I went to the Treasury; and I’d scarcely got within the door of his parlour there before he began in his woman’s voice, ‘Sir William, Sir William, let me hear what you have been doing. Give a clear account, sir, of your proceedings. General Enara’s despatches are not sufficiently detailed, sir; they are too brief, too laconic. The government of the country is kept in the dark, sir — comparatively speaking that is — at a time, too, when every facility for obtaining information ought to be afforded it. I wish to know every particular concerning that late affair at Cuttal-Curafee.’ He stopped a minute, and looked at me. I looked at him, and sat down, after settling the cushion on my chair. The pause being a rather lengthened one, I remarked that it was a fine morning. ‘What?’ said he, pricking up his ears. ‘The morning is charmingly cool and dry,’ was my answer. ‘Is it possible?’ exclaimed Warner. ‘Sir, I say, is it possible that the trite remarks of the most indolent and vacant time-killer should be the first and only words on the lips of a man just returned from the active service of his king, in a country reeking with rapine and carnage and teeming with the hideous pollutions of pagan savages?’

“‘What do you wish me to say?’ I asked, taking up a pamphlet that lay on the table and glancing at the title-page. ‘Sir,’ said the premier, very lofty and impressive. ‘Sir, my time is valuable. If your business with me is not of so important a nature as to require immediate attention we will defer it for the present.’ Endeavouring to suppress a yawn, and slightly stretching my limbs — not inelegant, are they Townshend? — I replied: ‘Business, sir? Your honour, I hardly know what I called upon you for. It was merely, I think, to pass away an idle hour. Can you tell me what the newest fashions are? I’m quite out just now in dress, for really one sees little in that line at Cuttal-Curafee.’ ‘Sir,’ replied Warner, ‘I wish you a very good morning. Mr Jones will show you the door.’ ‘Good morning, sir,’ said I, and I left the Treasury as good as kicked out.”

“Well, and where did you go next?”

“I went to a perfumers, and bought a few trifles in the way of gloves and combs. On returning, whom do you think I met?”

“Can’t guess.”

“Why, none other than the President to the Board of Trade.”

“What! Edward Percy?”

“Yes; he stopt in the street and began: ‘William! I say, William, who sent for you back? I know it for a fact, sir, that you sent up a puling memorial soliciting a recall. You did, sir, don’t begin to deny it.’

“‘Not,’ I answered. ‘Good morning, Edward! Charming seasonable weather! Take care of your lungs, lad — always pthisically inclined. I would recommend balsam of horehound — excellent remedy for pulmonary complaints! Good morning, lad!’ And gracefully waving my hand, I passed on.”

Here a waiter came in with wax-lights and a supper-tray. Sir William invited me to partake of his roast chicken and oyster-sauce, but I declined, as I had ordered supper on my own account in a room below. We separated therefore for the night, after shaking hands in the Colonel’s peculiar way — that is, a cool presentation of each individual’s fore-finger.

CHAPTER 6

Charles Townshend and Sir William Percy engage in a flirtation

The next morning rose as lovely and calm a day as ever ushered in the steps of summer. Wakened by the sunshine — I saw it streaming in through the stately windows of my chamber between the interstices of the carefully drawn curtains - my heart was rejoiced at the sight, and still more so when, on rising and withdrawing that veil, I beheld, in the lofty and dappled arch of a few marbled clouds, in the serenity and freshness of the air, a soft promise of settled summer. The storms, the fitful showers and chilly gusts, to which for the last month we had been subject were all gone. They had swept the sky and left it placid behind them.

It took me a full half hour to dress, and another half hour to view myself over from head to foot in the splendid full-length mirror with which my chamber was furnished. Really, when I saw the neat figure therein reflected, genteelly attired in a fashionable morning suit, with light soft hair parted on one side and brushed into glossy curls, I thought, “there are worse men in the world than Charles Townshend.” Having descended from my chamber, I made my way once again into the bustling, dirty inn-passage before described. It was bustling still, but not so dirty as it had been the night before, for a scullion wench was on her knees with a huge pail, scouring away for the bare life. A gentleman’s carriage was at the door. Two or three servants were lifting into it some luggage, and a family party stood waiting to enter — a lady, a gentleman, and some children. The children, indeed, were already mounted behind, and a stout rosy Angrian brood they looked. Their mother was receiving the parting civilities of a fine, tall, showy woman, most superbly dressed, who had come sailing out of a side room to see them off. It was Mrs Stancliffe, the hostess of this great house. I went up to her when the carriage had at length driven away, and paid my respects, for I had some little significance with her. She received and answered my attentions much in the tone and with the air of the Countess of Northangerland, only more civilly. Let not the Countess hear me, but it is a fact that she and the landlady bear a strong resemblance to each other, being nearly equal in point of longitude, latitude and circumference. Big women both! awful women! In temper, too, they are somewhat like, as the following anecdote will shew.

A public dinner being given a few months since by the Corporation of Zamorna to their Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Stuartville, and to Sir Wilson Thornton, in honour of the eminent services rendered by those officers to their country in the war campaign, the whole conduct of culinary matters was of course consigned to the superintendence of Mrs Stancliffe. It so happened that, by some oversight or other, the individual with whom she had contracted for a supply of game failed in his duty. On the great day of the feast, the tables were spread in the court-house. Stancliffe’s plate, conveyed over the way in iron chests, shone in tasteful arrangement and more than princely splendour on the ample boards. The gentlemen of the province were collected from far and near. The hour of six struck; the soup and fish were on the table.

The Lord Lieutenant walked in amidst deafening cheers, looking as much the fine gentleman as ever, and smiling and bowing his thanks to his townsmen. General Sir William Thornton followed and Edward Percy Esqre, M.P. Last, though not least, the proud, bitter owner of Hartford Hall entered, with a face like an unbleached holland sheet (it was after his wound), supported between Sir John Kirkwall and Wm Moore Esqre, an eminent barrister. A blessing being solemnly pronounced by the Right Reverend Dr Kirkwall, primate of Zamorna, and Amen responded by Dr Cook, vicar of Edwardston, all fell to. Fish and soup being despatched, game ought to have entered. But instead of it, in walked Mrs Stancliffe, grandly dressed, with a turban and a plume and a diamond aigrette like any countess in the gallery. She went to the back of Lord Stuartville’s chair.

“My lord,” said she, with great dignity of manner and in a voice sufficiently audible to be heard by everyone present. “I ought to apologize to your lordship for the delay of the second course, but my servants have failed in their duty and it is not forthcoming. However I have punished the insult thus offered to your lordship and the gentlemen of Zamorna. I have revolutionized my household. Before to-morrow night, not an ostler or a chamber-maid of the present set shall remain in my employment.”

The bland earl, passing his hand over his face to conceal a smile, said something gallant and polite by way of consolation to the indignant lady, and General Thornton assured her that such was the luxurious profusion and exquisite quality of her other provisions, two or three hares and partridges would never be missed. Mrs Stancliffe, however, refused to be comforted. Without at all relaxing the solemn concern of her countenance, she dropped a stately curtsey to the company and sailed away. She did revolutionize her household, and a pretty revolution it was, never such a helter-skelter turn out of waiters, barmaids, ostlers, boots and coachmen seen in this world before. Ever since this imperial move she has been popularly termed the Duchess of Zamorna! So Lord Stuartville delights to call her, even to her face. This is a liberty, however, taken by none but his gallant lordship. If any other man were to venture so far she’d soon spurt out in his face.

I had scarcely finished my breakfast when a waiter brought me a billet to the following effect: “Dear Townshend, will you take a walk with me this morning? yours etc. W.Percy.” I scribbled for answer: “Dear Baronet, with all the xcing. Yours etc. C. Townshend.”

We met each other in the passage; and arm in arm, each with a light cane in his hand, started on our jaunt.

Zamorna was all astir. Half her population seemed poured out into the wide new streets. Not a trace remained of last night’s storm. Summer was reigning with ardour in the perfectly still air and unclouded sunshine. Ladies in white dresses flitted along the streets and crowded the magnificent and busy shops. Before us rose the new minster, lifting its beautiful front and rich fretted pinnacles almost as radiant as marble against a sky of southern purity. Its bells, sweet-toned as Bochea’s harp, rang out the morning chimes high in air, and young Zamorna seemed wakened to quicker life by the voice of that lofty music. How had the city so soon sprung to perfect vigour and beauty from the iron crush of Simpson’s hoof? Here was no mark of recent tyranny, no trace of grinding exaction, no symptom of a lately repulsed invasion, of a now existing heavy national debt, nothing of squalor or want or suffering. Lovely women, stately mansions, busy mills and gorgeous shops appeared on all sides.

When we first came out the atmosphere was quite clear. As we left the west end and approached the bridge and river, whose banks were piled with enormous manufactories and bristled with mill-chimneys, tall, stately, and steep as slender towers, we breathed a denser air. Columns of smoke as black as soot rose thick and solid from the chimneys of two vast erections - Edward Percy’s, I believe, and Mr Sydenham’s — and, slowly spreading, darkened the sky above all Zamorna.

“That’s Edward’s tobacco pipe,” said Sir William, looking up, as we passed close under his brother’s mill-chimney, whose

cylindrical pillar rose three hundred feet into the air. Having crossed the bridge, we turned into the noble road which leads down to Hartford, and now the full splendour of the June morning began to disclose itself round us.

Immediately before us, the valley of the Olympian opened broad and free; the road with gentle descent wound white as milk down among the rich pastures and waving woods of the vale. My heart expanded as I looked at the path we were to tread, edging the feet of the gentle hills whose long sweep subsided to level on the banks of the river — the glorious river! brightly flowing, in broad quiet waves and with a sound of remote seas, through scenery as green as Eden. We were almost at the gates of Hartford Park. The house was visible far away among its sunny grounds, and its beech-woods, extending to the road, lifted high above the causeway a silver shade. This was not a scene of solitude. Carriages smoothly rolled past us every five minutes, and stately cavaliers galloped by on their noble chargers.

We had walked on for a quarter of an hour, almost in silence, when Sir William suddenly exclaimed,

“Townshend, what a pretty girl!”

“Where?” I asked.

He pointed to a figure a little in advance of us: a young lady, mounted on a spirited little pony, and followed by a servant, also mounted. I quickened my pace to get a nearer view. She wore a purple habit, long and sweeping; it disclosed a fine, erect and rounded form, set off to advantage by the grace of her attitude and the ease of all her movements. When I first looked, her face was turned away, and concealed partly by the long curls of her hair and partly by her streaming veil, but she presently changed her position, and then I saw a fine decided profile, a bright eye, and a complexion of exquisite bloom. From the first moment I knew she was not a stranger.

“I’ve seen that face before,” said I to Sir William. Then, as my recollection cleared, I added, “It was last night in the mercer’s shop opposite Stancliffe’s.” For in fact this was the very girl whom I had watched from the window.

“I, too, have seen her before,” returned the baronet. “I know her name. It is Miss Moore, the daughter of the noted barrister.”

“What!” I exclaimed. “Jane — the beautiful Angrian?” Perhaps my readers may recollect a description of this young lady which appeared some time since, in a sort of comparison between Eastern and Western women.

Sir William proceeded. “I saw her last autumn at the musical festival which was held in September in the minster at Zamorna. You remember the anecdote concerning her which was told in the papers at that time?”

“Can’t say I do.”

“Why, people said that she had particularly attracted the attention of His Majesty, who attended the Festival, and that he has bestowed on her the title of the Rose of Zamorna.”

“Was it true?”

“No further than this: she sat full in his sight and he stared at her as everybody else did, for she really was a very imposing figure in her white satin dress and stately plume of snowy ostrich feathers. He asked her name, too, and when somebody told him, he said ‘By God, she’s the Rose of Zamorna! I don’t see another woman to come near her.’ That was all. I daresay he never thought of her afterwards. She’s not one of his sort.”

“Well, but,” continued I, “I should like to see a little more of her. Heigho! I believe I’m in love!”

“So am I,” said Percy, echoing the sigh. “Head over ears! Look now, did you ever see a better horse-woman? What grace and spirit! But there’s that cursed angle in the road, it will hide her. There, she’s turned it. I declare, my sun is eclipsed. Is not yours, Townshend?”

“Yes, totally; but can’t we follow her, Colonel? Where does she live?”

“Not far off. I really think we might manage it, though I never was introduced to her in my life, nor you either, I dare say.”

“To my sorrow, never.”

“Well then, have you any superfluous modesty? Because if you have, put it into your waistcoat pocket and button your coat over it. Now, man, are you eased of the commodity?”

“Perfectly.”

“Come along, then. Her father is a barrister and attending the assizes at Angria. Consequently, he is not at home. What so natural as for two elegant young men like you and I to be wanting him on business, respecting a mortgage — on a friend’s estate, possibly, or probably on our own — or a lawsuit concerning our rich old uncle’s contested will? The servants having answered that Mr Moore is not at home, can’t we inquire for his daughter (she has no mother by the bye), to give her some particular charge which we won’t entrust to menials? Now, man, have you got your cue?”

I put my thumb to the side of my nose, and we mutually strode on.

Mr Moore’s house is a lease-hold on Lord Hartford’s property, and he has the character in Zamorna of being a toady of that nobleman’s. The barrister, though an able man, is certainly, according to report, but lightly burdened with principle, and it is possible that with his large fortune he may have hopes of one day contesting the election of the city with its present representative — in which case Lord Hartford’s influence would be no feather in the scale of success.

“We enter here,” said Percy, pausing at a green gate which opened sweetly beneath an arch of laburnums upon a lawn like velvet. A white-walled villa stood before us, bosomed in a blooming shrubbery, with green walks between the rose-trees and a broad carriage-road winding through all to the door. In that bright hour (it was now nearly noon) nothing could be more soothing than its aspect of shade and retirement. One almost preferred it to the wide demesne and princely mansion which it fronted with such modest dignity. Arrived at the door, Sir William knocked. A footman opened it.

“Is Mr Moore within?”

“No, sir; master left home last week for the assizes.”

Sir William affected disappointment. He turned, and made a show of consulting me in a whisper. Then again, addressing the servant: “Miss Moore is at home, perhaps?” “Yes, sir.”

“Then be kind enough to give in our names to her — Messrs Clarke and Gardiner — and say we wish to see her for an instant on a matter of some importance”

The servant bowed, and politely requesting us to walk forward, threw open the door of a small sitting-room. The apartment was prettily furnished. Its single large window, flung wide open, admitted the faint gale which now and then breathed over the languor of the burning noon. This window looked specially pleasant, for it had a deep recess and a seat pillowed with a white cushion, over which waved the festoons of a muslin curtain. Seating ourselves within this embayment, we leaned over the sill, and scented the jessamine whose tendrils were playing in the breeze around the casement.

"This is Miss Moore's own parlour," said Sir William pointing to a little work-table with scissors, thimble and lace upon it, and then, reverting his eye to a cabinet piano with an open music book above its key-board. "I always appropriate when I'm left alone in a lady's boudoir," he continued; and getting up softly, he was on the point of priggish something from the work-table, when a voice slightly hummed in the passage, and without any other sound, either of footstep or rustling dress, Miss Moore like an apparition dawned upon us. The Colonel turned, and she was there. He looked at her, or rather through her, before he spoke. Really, she seemed to be haloed — there was something so radiant in her whole appearance. Not the large dark eyes of the west, nor the large even arch of the eye-brow; not the enthusiastic and poetic look, nor the braided or waving locks of solemn shade; but just a girl in white, plump and very tall. Her riding-habit was gone, and her beaver; and golden locks (the word golden I use in courtesy, mind, reader) drooped on the whitest neck in Angria. Her complexion seemed to glow: it was so fair, so blooming. She had very rosy lips and a row of small even teeth sparkling like pearls; her nose was prominent and straight and her eyes very spirited. Regularity of feature by no means formed her chief charm: it was the perfection of a lively complexion and handsome figure.

The lady looked very grave; her curtsy was dignified and distant.

"Permit me, madam," said the Colonel, "to introduce myself and my friend. I am Mr Clarke, this gentleman, Mr Gardiner. We are both clients of your father. You will have heard him mention the lawsuit now pending between Clarke and Gardiner versus Jowett."

"I daresay," returned Miss Moore, "though I don't recollect just now. Will you be seated, gentlemen?"

She took her own seat on a little couch near the work-table and, resting her elbow on the arm, looked very graceful and majestic.

"A warm morning," observed Sir William, by way of keeping up the conversation.

"Very," she replied demurely.

"A pretty place Mr Moore has here," said I.

"Rather," was Miss Moore's answer; then, carelessly taking up her work, she continued. "How can I serve you, gentlemen?"

Sir William rubbed his hand. He was obliged to recur to business.

"Why, madam, will you be so good as to say to Mr Moore when he returns that James Cartwright, the witness who was so reluctant to come up, has at length consented to appear, and that consequently the trial may proceed, if he thinks proper, next month."

"Very well," said she. Then, still bending her eyes upon the lace, she continued. "How far have you come to tell my father this? Do you reside in the neighbourhood?"

"No, madam, but we are both on a visit there at present. We came to look after some little mill-property we possess in Zamorna."

You must have had a hot walk," pursued Miss Moore. "Will you take some refreshment?"

We both declined, but she took no notice of our refusal, and, touching a bell, ordered the servant who answered it to bring wine etc. She then quietly returned to her lace-work. We might have been lap-dogs or children for all the discomposure our presence seemed to occasion her. Sir William was a match for her, however. He sat, one leg crossed over the other, regarding her with a hard stare. I believe she knew his eyes were fixed upon her, but she kept her countenance admirably. At last he said, "I have had the pleasure of seeing you before, madam."

"Probably, sir; I don't always stay at home."

"It was in Zamorna Minster last September."

She did colour a little, and laughed, for she recollected, doubtless, the admiration with which her name had been mentioned at that time in the journals, and the thousand eyes which had been fixed upon her as the centre of attraction as she sat in her white satin robe high placed in the lofty gallery of the minster.

"A great many people saw me at that time," she answered, "and talked about me too, for my size gave me wonderful distinction."

"Nothing but size?" asked Sir William, and his look expressed the rest.

"Will you take some salmagundi, Mr Clarke?" said she, rising and approaching the tray which the servant had just placed on the table. Mr Clarke expressed his willingness; so did Mr Gardiner. She helped both, plentifully, and they fell to.

A knock came to the door. She stepped to the window and looked out. I saw her nod and smile, and her smile was by no means a simper: it showed her front teeth, and made her eyes shine very pleasantly. She walked into the passage, and opened the door herself.

"Now, Jane, how are you?" said a masculine voice. Percy winked at me.

"How are you?" she answered. "And why are you come here this hot day?"

"What! you're not glad to see me, I guess," returned the visitor.

"Yes I am, because you look so cool! I'm sorry we've no fire to warm you, but you can step into the kitchen."

"Come, be steady! Moore's at Angria, varry like?"

"Varry like he is — but you may walk forwards notwithstanding." Then, in a lower voice, "I've two chits in my parlour — very like counting-house clerks or young surgeons or something of that kind. Just come and look at them."

Percy and I arrested the victual on the way to our mouths. We were wroth.

"The jade!" said Percy.

I said nothing. However, a more urgent cause of disturbance was at hand. That voice which had been speaking sounded but too familiar, both to Sir William and myself, and now the speaker was approaching with measured step and the clank of a spur. He continued talking as he came: "I've come to dine with you, Jane, and then I've to step over to Hartford Hall about some business. I'll call again at six o'clock, and Julia says you've to come back with me to Girmington."

"Whether I will or not, I suppose, General?"

"Whether you will or not."

And here Sir Wilson Thornton paused, for he was in the room, and his glance had encountered us, seated at the table and tucking in

to the wines with which Miss Moore had provided us. I don't think either Sir William or I changed countenance. General Thornton's eye always assumes a cold annoyed expression when it sees me. I met him freely: "Ho! General! how d'ye do? My word, you do look warm with walking! Is your face swelled?"

"Not 'at I know on, Mr Townshend," he answered coldly, and, bowing to Sir William, he took his seat.

"My dear General," I continued. "Don't on any account drink water in your present state. You seem to me to be running thin! I wish you may not catch your death of cold! Dear, dear - what a pity you should appear such a figure before a beautiful young lady like Miss Moore!"

"If I'm any vex to Miss Moore she'll be good enough to tell me of it without yer interference," said the General, much disturbed.

"Had you ever the scarlet fever?" I inquired anxiously.

"I cannot see how my health concerns you," he answered.

"Or the sweating sickness?" I continued.

The General brushed the dust from his coat-sleeve and, turning briskly to Miss Moore, asked her if these were the lads she had taken for two young surgeons.

"Yes," said she, "but I begin to think I was in the wrong."

"I would like to know what nonsense brought 'em here," said Thornton. "They're no more surgeons nor I am. Percy, I wonder ye'll go looking abâat t' country wi' such a nout as Townshend."

"Percy!" exclaimed Miss Moore. "O, it is Sir William Percy! I thought I had seen that gentleman before. It was at a review: he was one of the royal staff."

The Colonel bowed. "The greatest compliment I ever had paid me," said he, "that Miss Moore should single me out from among thousands and recollect my face."

"Just because it struck me for its likeness to Lord Northangerland's," replied she.

"From whatever cause, madam, the honour is mine, and I am proud of it."

He searched her countenance with one of those sentimental and sinister glances which, when they flicker in his eyes, do indeed make him strongly resemble his father. I don't think he was pleased with the result of his scrutiny. Miss Moore's aspect remained laughing and open as ever. Had she blushed or shrunk away, Sir William would have triumphed. But hers was no heart to be smitten with sudden, secret and cankering love — the sort of love he often aims to inspire.

"Come, Townshend," said he, drawing on his gloves. "We will go."

"I think you'd better, lad," observed Thornton. "Neither you nor Townshend have done yourselves any credit by this spree."

We both were bold enough to approach Miss Moore; and she was good-natured or thoughtless enough to shake hands with us freely, and say that when her father came home she should be happy to see his clients Messrs Clarke and Gardiner again, either about the lawsuit or to take a friendly cup of tea with them. The girl, to do her justice, seemed to have some tact. I don't think I shall soon forget her very handsome face, or the sound of her voice and the pleasant expression of her eyes.

As we two passed again through the embowered gate and stepped out into the now burning road, I asked Sir William if he was smitten.

"Not I," said he. "There's no mind there, and very little heart. If ever I marry, rest satisfied my choice will not fall upon the Rose of Zamorna."

Yet something had evidently gone wrong with the young Colonel. His vanity was wounded, or he was vexed at the interference of General Thornton. Whatever the cause was, certain it he grew mightily disagreeable, snapping on all sides and snarling sourly at everything. We had not walked above a quarter of a mile, when he said he had business which called him elsewhere, and he must now bid me good-day. The baronet turned into a retired lane branching from the main road, and I continued my course straight on.

Jane Moore, staying at Girmington with General and Lady Thornton, sings stirring songs of the charge of the men of Ardsley and of the siege of Evesham in the recent Angrian war. Castlereagh, Earl of Stuartville brings news that Zamorna is expected in Zamorna City next day, and that the populace, who are furious that he has been visiting Northangerland, are threatening to riot.

"The rumour of invaders through all Zamorna ran.

Then Turner Grey his watch-word gave:

Ho! Ardsley to the van!

Lord Hartford called his yeomen, and Warner raised his clan,

But first in fiercest gallop rushed Ardsley to the van!

On came Medina's turbans, Sir John hurled his ban:

'Mid the thousand hearts who scorned it still Ardsley kept the van!

The freshening gales of battle a hundred standards fan,

And doubt not Ardsley's pennon floats foremost in the van!

Cold on the field of carnage they have fallen man for man,

And no more in march or onslaught will Ardsley lead the van!

Loud wail lamenting trumpets for all that gallant clan,

And Angrians shout their signal:

Ho! Ardsley to the van!

Give them the grave of honour where their native river ran,

Let them rest! They died like heroes

In the battle's fiery van!

And when their names are uttered, this hope may cheer each man:

That land shall never perish

Where such true hearts led the van!"

The aged halls of Girington echoed to this heroic song, and a few notes even strayed through the open windows of the drawing-room into the twilight park. It was still evening. A heaven unclouded smiled to the ascent of a moon undimmed. That summer day was gone, and while the burning west closed its gates upon her departure, softer paths opened in the east for the steps of a mild summer night.

Is that horseman thinking of the glory which smiles above those trees through which his form glances so fast? Pressing up the avenue, he never turns to look from what source stream those silver rays which fall upon him at every opening of the giant boughs. Yet no heavy care absorbs his thoughts, for he lifts his head to listen when that music comes across his way, and he smiles when at its close a laugh is heard from the mansion at whose door he now dismounts.

General and Lady Thornton sat vis à vis in two opposite arm-chairs by a window of their saloon. The softening light stole upon Julia, and in Sir Wilson's eyes made her look like an angel. In the background, and almost lost in the dusk, a third person sat at the piano, playing and talking at the same time. The voice sufficiently indicated her identity. It was Miss Moore, of Kirkham Lodge, Hartford, who had accompanied Colonel Thornton according to his invitation.

"General," she was saying, in answer to some bantering speech of the worthy baronet's, "I am afraid I shall die an old maid."

"It'll be your own fault if you do, I think, Jane."

"Well, but nobody ever made me an offer yet, positively."

"Because you're so proud and saucy," said Julia. "You frighten them away."

"Indeed, you're mistaken! There's one man, at least, whom I've done my very best to win."

"Who is that?"

"Lord Hartford. Now, I've long been in love with that man. Seriously, there's nobody I should like half so well to be married to — and I've danced with him and smiled at him and sung him all my most triumphant songs in my finest style, without as yet gaining even an outwork of the fortress. Once I thought I had made some little impression. It was after singing that Ardsley song you've heard just now. He came and stood behind me, and asked for it again. The same night, he offered to let me have his carriage to go home, for our own was engaged with my father in one of his circuits; and the next morning he actually walked down to the Lodge to breakfast with me. How I did exert myself to please! I'm sure I was most fascinating! He went home, and I fully expected to receive a proposal in form before night; but no. I'm afraid I had overshot the mark. At any rate, nothing came of it."

"The Earl of Stuartville," said a servant, opening the door, and the Earl of Stuartville walked in.

"Good evening, Thornton," said his lordship. "All in shadow, I see — no candles. Perfectly romantic! Is that Lady Julia, covered with moonlight? Good heavens! My heart's gone! Who ever saw anything so perfectly transcendent? Thornton, you'd better challenge me forthwith!"

The Earl threw himself into a chair next to Lady Julia, and, stretching out one elegant leg, leaned towards her like an enamoured Frenchman.

"What on earth has brought you here, Castlereagh?" said her ladyship. "Excuse me for forgetting the new title — but you know, Castle, that former name must be endeared to me, for with it are connected all our earliest associations."

"Of the days when your ladyship's pet-cognomen for me was man-monkey."

"Happy days, those, Castlereagh!" sighed Julia. "You'd nothing then to do but to dress and dance and dine. No Secretary of State, no General of Division business, no county politics to control or court intrigues to counteract."

"True, Lady Julia; I used to turn out of bed at two o'clock in the afternoon, dress till four, lounge till seven, dine till nine, and dance till six next morning."

"You did, my dear lord; that was just a chart of your life. Alas! did I ever think the owner of the prettiest fancy waistcoat and the best perfumed pair of mustaches in Verdopolis would ever expose his elegance to the rigours of a winter campaign, his eye-glass to the danger of being broken in a field of battle!"

Here the chat was hushed, lost in a solemn burst of music from the piano and the reveille of a thrilling voice.

*"Deep the Cirhala flows,
And Evesham o'er it swells,
The last night she shall smile upon
In silence round her dwells!
All lean upon their spears,
All rest within, around,
But some shall know to-morrow night
A slumber far more sound!
The summer dew unseen
On fort and turret shines:
What dew shall fall when battle's voice
Is heard along the lines?
Trump and triumphant drum
The conflict won shall spread:
Who then will turn aside and say
We mourn the noble dead?
Strong hands, heroic hearts
Shall homeward throng again,
Returned from battle's bloody grasp:*

*Where will they leave the slain?
Beneath a foreign sod,
Beside an alien wave,
Watched by the martyr's holy God,
Who guards the martyr's grave!"*

Miss Moore rose and came forward as she concluded the song.

"Now, my lord," said she, addressing the Earl of Stuartville. "You see, I have forced you to hear, if you will not see me. Don't apologize! I am offended, of course. It will avail you nothing to say you did not observe me, it was dark, etc. You should have perceived my presence by instinct."

"What!" returned his lordship. "I suppose the Rose of Zamorna ought to be known by its fragrance. Miss Jane, sit down. I have something to tell you; something which — I can answer for it — will make your heart beat high with indignation."

"Does it relate to the reason which has brought you here?" she asked, taking her seat on an ottoman near him.

"Exactly so; and you must needs think it an important circumstance which should bring me ten miles at this time of night."

"Why then, let's hear it, without any more ado," interposed Thornton. "Did aught go wrong at the magistrates' meeting after I left them?"

"No," returned the earl, "except that Edward Percy and I had some sparring about a case of illegitimacy. However, that was all settled; we'd cleared scores, and Edward was just turning down his final glass of brandy and water, when Sydenham, who was standing by the court-house window, remarked that there seemed to be a crowd collecting at the lower end of the street — and as he spoke we heard a yell just for all the world like one of their election cries. I desired Mackay to go immediately and see what there was to do, but before he could get out five or six gentlemen of Zamorna rushed in a body up the steps of the magistrates' room, and the foremost announced, with more glee than grief, he believed there was going to be a riot. 'What about?' I asked. Nobody answered, and some of us turned pale, for all at once a great rush thundered up the street, and in two minutes the whole front of Stancliffe's and the court-house was blocked up by a mass of howling ragamuffins."

"Did they break t' windows?" asked Thornton.

"Not they; there was not a stone thrown, and indeed, they were not thinking of us. Their faces were all turned the other way, lifted up to the front windows of the hotel. They were yelling terribly, but for my life I could not tell what they said. However, you may be sure we set sharply about the business of swearing in special constables, and a message was despatched to the barracks to have the soldiers ready. Meantime I and Percy went out onto the steps and shouted to the crowd to disperse, but they answered us with a loud roar of 'Down with Northangerland! No French! No Ardrahians!' 'Well, my lads,' I said, 'Do you call us French? Do you say we're for Northangerland and Ardrah? If that be all, I'll join you in a hearty groan against all three — and then disperse, and go home quietly.' And so the groan was given, and a tremendous rumble it was; and Edward, stepping forward and sticking his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, shouted out, 'Now, lads, let's have a yell — the highest you can raise — set apart entirely in honour of the old harlot-ridden buck Northangerland! Lift it up, lads! I'll set the time!' He did so, and the very steps he stood on quaked to the hellish sound they raised in unison. 'Fellow-countrymen!' said Edward. 'I'm proud to see such a spirit amongst you! Now go home. You've done enough for one day.' But they did not stir. They only answered by a confused and horrible jabber which it was impossible to comprehend, and still they looked up at the hotel, as if there was something there they could have liked to have gotten out. 'Do you think Northangerland is at Stancliffe's?' I asked. 'No, no,' was the answer. 'We'd have had blood if he were!' and a single voice added, 'But that dog, his son-in-law, is.'"

Castlereagh paused. This announcement included much. Thornton started from his chair, and strode once or twice through the room; Julia looked troubled, and uttered some faint exclamation; as for Miss Moore, she said nothing, but even in the pale moonlight it might be seen that she coloured. The Earl went on. "When we heard this, Edward Percy just walked back into the court-house, sat down, and said he wished he might die if he lifted a hand to prevent any thing that might happen. I stood over him and swore in good earnest, 'If what we had heard was true, and if the crowd did not disperse immediately, I'd have three hundred cavalry from the barracks and ride them down like vermin.' 'By God you shall not,' said Edward. 'The soldiers have no right to control the people, d-d d-d red tyrants!' I said my measures should be vigorous and that I would not be restrained by his cursed malignity. I got on horseback and dashed through the crowd over the way to Stancliffe's. I went in. They were all in some panic, as you may suppose, but I sent for the mistress and asked her if the Duke was really here. She said no, but that the Earl of Richton's carriage had arrived an hour ago, and that had given rise to the rumour. I asked her if the ambassador were in it, but she said, only his family physician, Dr Morrison, who had brought word that his grace had left Selden House and would be in Zamorna to-morrow at twelve o'clock. Richton was travelling with him, and Morrison preceded them by a day's journey to prepare the way. Furnished with this information, I went out again, told the people to go now and be sure to come to the same spot at noon to-morrow, when Zamorna would be there to meet them in the body. 'And then,' I said, 'let us see what you'll do. At present he's two hundred miles off.' They took the word, and in a few hours the street was clear. Now, Thornton, what think you of the prospect? You and I must be at Stancliffe's betimes in the morning. As for Edward Percy, he says he'll lie in bed all the day to-morrow."

"Let him lie there and be d-d!" muttered Thornton. "I care naught about him, and t' Duke deserves what he's like to get. He sudn't vex folk so. What need had he to go three or four-hundred mile to see an ow'd worn out rake? Edward's raight enow abâat that. He's allus brewing bitter drink for hisselsn, and now he mun sup it for aught I know. I wish he'd his raight wit. Where's Hartford?"

"Just returned to the Hall from Gazemba. But he'll be of no use. He'll go to bed too."

"I niver knew sich bother," continued the worthy General. "I hate t' thoughts o' folk being ridden down wi' troopers. It's not natural like. But if they mess wi' them they sudn't do, I care n't if t' cannon be pointed at 'em. Hasaiver ya mun flay 'em first Castlereagh — flay 'em first and let's hear what he says hisselsn when he comes. Happen if he once gets among 'em they'll think better on't."

"I hope they will," echoed Julia, wringing her hands. "I hope they will. Do you think, Thornton, they'll try to do him harm?"

"Who cares?" answered Sir William gruffly.

"I am sure you do," said she, "for all you're so cross about it."

"Julia, be quiet!" returned he.

Julia was quiet; and Miss Moore looked at her from under the dark shadow of her eyelashes with an expression almost of scorn — a momentary expression which vanished instantly.

"The Duke will pass Gironington gates on his way to the city," she observed in an indifferent tone.

"Yes," said Castlereagh. "But you will hardly distinguish the carriage if you watch for it. It is quite a plain one, like any private gentleman's with six horses and three postillions."

"Perhaps one might distinguish the Duke himself," she replied, regarding Castlereagh with the same side-glance out of the corner of her eye.

"Jane, talk sense!" said Thornton testily, and she raised her head and fixed on him a look kindling with sudden astonishment and anger. But she did not speak, and by biting in her under-lip seemed to control the emotion which was darkening her face with crimson. Thornton now asked Lord Stuartville to step with him into his study, and the party broke up.

CHAPTER 7

Charles Townshend watches Zamorna's return to Zamorna City

All business seemed suspended on the morning of the 26th of June. A spirit of excitement pervaded the population of Zamorna, as though at the time of a general election. Few ladies were to be seen in the streets, but groups of gentlemen or mechanics loitered by every lamp-post. Most of the mills were idle, for the men would not come to their work. At ten o'clock the court-house doors were thrown open, and, contrary to Lord Stuartville's prediction, Lord Hartford's carriage was the first that drew up at the steps below. Special constables began to appear, leaving the magistrate's room and crossing the street to Stancliffe's. As noon approached, the crowd thickened. A dense mass began to form in front of the hotel.

It was now that from a window in the second story I saw the whole. It was a fine day — the sun burning high, the sky of its deepest summer azure — but nobody seemed to feel the scorching heat. Harried expectation appeared in every face. This would have been a capital position for a stranger, for the greatest men of the province crossed the street at every instant. General Thornton, I saw, had arrived, for he was standing on the inner steps, and pointing out to Mr Walker, a principal mill owner, a heavy red flag which hung stirless from a tall banner-staff held by two grimy operatives just opposite. As the flag occasionally deployed its sullen folds, rather to the swaying of its pole than to any breeze felt in the sultry air, it revealed these words: 'Angria scorns Traitors — Northangerland to the block'; on the reverse: 'No Percy influence'. Lord Stuartville walked up, and I heard him say distinctly, "We'll not put down that banner! It has a good motto." Indeed, it was evident that the nobility and gentry of the town were by no means at war with the lower orders. On the contrary, they were pleased with this demonstration of feeling against the arch-enemy, whose stinging insults were fresh in the memory and keen in the hearts of each. They only wished to keep this feeling within bounds to prevent any unseemly and impolitic ebullition.

Well, time passed on. The tumult swelled and the crowd thickened. The whole air seemed hoarse with sound. Impatient expectation was at its height. People looked up to the town-clock, which shewed, in vivid sunlight, its hand on the stroke of twelve: another second, and every ear heard the deep, strong stroke of iron reverberate on the air. From Trinity Church and the minster it pealed more musically. Their chime was hardly hushed, when a few flags on the farthest outskirts of the crowd were seen to wave agitatedly. They crowded forward, and then were hurried back. A wild, deepening sound arose. One felt a sensation of panic, as it rushed on through the swaying, agitated ranks, gathering strength in its rapid approach. At last, close under the Hotel windows, "He is coming - he is coming!" was shouted from a hundred voices. Within the house the announcement rose, and footsteps stamped up the staircase. My chamber door burst open, and twenty persons were at my back, pressing one behind another to get a glimpse from the window; I saw, as I leaned far out, every sash along the wide front similarly occupied.

The magistrates were all now out on the court-house steps. I looked for Edward Percy, but doubtless he was in bed; at any rate he was not there. Meantime, a dark furrow opened in the crowded distance — I know not how, for the street had seemed too densely packed to admit another man. Slowly wading through, I perceived the heads of horses and the mounted figures of postillions. At this moment, the groan began — the scornful, abhorrent, malignant groan of the populace. It filled one with dread — the sound grew so loud and furious, the people thronged and swayed with such frantic motion, while above them the two gigantic standard bearers wildly waved their vast and gory ensign. All, meantime, stretched to gaze at the approaching carriage. It delved its way through the solid mass with difficulty, but still on it came. The horses tossed their heads high as they backed to the hard curb of the postillions. They were now near. My strained eyes viewed the whole distinctly. The carriage was open and large: it contained three figures. There was a deep interest in watching these three, and trying to discover how their present situation affected them.

One, in a white hat and blue frogged dress coat, was bending forwards and directing the postillions earnestly. He seemed anxious, I thought, for the carriage to be drawn up close by the court-house; he looked towards the gentlemen there, and glances of intelligence seemed to pass between them and him. These — I mean the magistrates — had all uncovered. Lord Stuartville appeared in front; his curls were shining in the sun; he held his hat in one hand and with the other was motioning to the people to part their ranks. General Thornton, likewise hat in hand, was hastily giving orders to a man whom I knew to be his own attendant; I saw him point to the barracks. As to Lord Hartford, he stood back silent and upright: his deep eye wandered over the people and fixed fiercely on the carriage. Lord Richton (of course the owner of the blue frogged coat and white hat could be no other) is said not to have the nerves of a lion, yet he can exhibit much self-possession in cases of considerable apparent danger. I was amused by watching the calmness of his face, divested either of smile or frown and expressing in its light eyes, always quick in their motions, a sort of concern wholly unmixed with either fear or anger. He seemed to take upon himself the office of dictator and manager, and very busy he appeared, now telegraphing with the group on the court-house steps, and now checking or urging the postillions as prudence seemed to demand. The other male occupant of the carriage was very still. He leaned back in what seemed a very careless posture; a hat with a broad brim and slouched much forwards shaded his face; he said nothing; he looked at nobody. The only token of life I saw him give was taking a gold snuff-box from his waistcoat pocket, tapping it thrice, extracting a pinch of snuff with his finger and thumb, then replacing the box and buttoning his coat well over it.

A more interesting object was presented by the third figure of this group — a lady, and, of course, the Duchess of Zamorna. She was dressed with that sort of stylish simplicity peculiar to herself — a light summer pelisse, gracefully fitted to her figure; a pretty simple bonnet, tied with a broad ribbon; no veil, no flower, no plume. Her very hair was smoothed out of its native luxuriance of curl, and plainly parted on her forehead: this mode, which suits so few, suited her. It seemed to impart additional serenity to her forehead, additional straightness and delicacy to her nose; it relieved by more striking contrast her fair, transparent complexion, and gave her eyes a touch of something saintly. I cannot tell whether she was afraid, or grieved or mortified; your great people will not reveal their emotions to the eyes of common men; however, she was wholly colourless except a faint tinge in the lips.

"No Percy influence!" shouted and howled the frantic mob. "Down with Northangerland — roll his bloody head in the dirt!" and they shook the insulting banner high over his daughter, involving her figure for a moment in the sullen fiery shade reflected from its folds. Meantime, the person in the broad brim sat like any wet Quaker whom the spirit had not yet moved. His carriage, however,

having by dint of Richton's skilful pilotage at length reached the court-house, now cast anchor at the steps, the cessation of motion seemed to remind him that he was in rather a peculiar situation. He gave a look straight before him, then to the right hand, the left, and finally over his shoulder. After a moment's meditation he lifted his forefinger and beckoned to the Earl of Stuartville. I was surprised to see him do anything half so intelligent. A conference of three minutes ensued, in which Stuartville's part seemed to consist in answering a string of running questions delivered as fast as the lips of the inquirer could move. Broad-brim then drew himself up, lifted his beaver a little, rose all at once to his feet in the carriage, and in so doing uncovered his head. A breeze passing through his hair waved it from temples and brow. He stood confessed.

A sudden movement, unexpected, generally checks affairs, for a moment at least, in whatever channel they may chance to be running. On the present occasion, this rising of the Duke of Zamorna lulled the yell which had given him such hoarse welcome to his kingdom. The hush first dropped on those immediately round him; others caught the feeling that there was something to be seen, something to be heard, and they too were silent. The calm spread, and ere long nothing was to be heard but the dull ocean-murmur of a mighty and expectant multitude. He, meantime, remained erect, the breast of his coat open, one hand resting on his side. The other at first held his hat, till Richton relieved him of it without his apparently being conscious it was gone. He seemed to wait and watch till the living vortex round him sunk into tranquillity. Comparative silence stole over it: every eye sought his. So mute was the pause of expectation, one's heart quaked at the thought of its being broken.

"I wish," said the Duke of Zamorna, "I wish, lads, you'd all something to do at home."

His voice was familiar, and so were his features. The people seemed disposed to hear more, and, after pushing his long fingers through his hair, he spoke again.

"Is there a man among you wise enough to render a reason for the bonny display you're making just now?"

("Yes! Yes!" exclaimed several voices.)

"I say no! Is it because I have been to see an old acquaintance and distant relative of mine who is a feeble invalid?"

("Your Grace has been taking on wi' Northangerland again and we hate him," replied a single voice in the crowd.)

"What do you say, my lad?" said the Duke, who, it seems, had not distinctly heard the observation. The man repeated it.

"Taking on with Northangerland!" continued his Grace. "That's a vague sort of expression. I've been to the south, looking after my own and my kinsfolk's concerns, and concerning myself no more about politics than most of you do about religion."

"Have you leagued with Northangerland?" asked one of the bannermen sternly.

The Duke turned upon him with a dark and changed aspect. He eyed his rebellious standard and said coldly, "Take down that flag."

"No!" shouted the bannerman. "This is the flag of the people."

"Take it down," replied his Grace in a deepened tone, and he savagely glared at the magistrates. They instantly despatched six special constables to execute the Duke's mandate. Loud uproar ensued; the huge flag was tossed up and down as its bearers struggled to retain what the constables were resolved to seize; the yelling of the mob redoubled; and all at once, with hideous roar, a rush was made on the royal carriage. A frightful scene ensued. The gentlemen who had crowded the court-house steps and windows sprang into the crowd. A dismal shriek was heard as the startled horses — no longer obedient to the postillions — plunged in terror amongst the densely wedged crowd. Their wild eyes and streaming manes were seen tossed over the sea of human heads, as their iron hoofs, prancing madly, crushed all around them. I looked in agony at the Duchess; she was bending back, and had hid her face in the cushions of the carriage. As for Zamorna, with teeth fast set and the curls of his bare head shadowing his fierce eyes, he looked hellish; he gave not a word either to his wife or Lord Richton; his glance was fixed in one direction. At last, as a thundering beating sound and a dense cloud of dust rose in the quarter where he looked, he got up, and speaking with a very loud distinct voice said, "Men of Zamorna, three hundred horsemen are upon you. I see them; they are here; you will be ridden down in five minutes if you do not bear back instantly from the carriage." There was no time: with horse-hair waving and broad sabres glancing, with loud huzza and dint of thunder, the cavalry charged on the mob. Lord Stuartville led the van, waving his hat and mounted on a horse like a devil. Nothing could stand this, not even the mad mechanics and desperate operatives of Zamorna. They flew like chaff; it was the whirlwind chasing the sand of the desert. Causeway and carriage were cleared; the wide street lay bare in the fierce sun behind them. A few wounded men alone were left with shattered limbs, lying on the pavement. These were soon taken off to the infirmary, their blood was washed from the stones, and no sign remained of what had happened. When I looked for the royal carriage, it stood in front of Stancliffe's, empty; a cloak was flung over the seat and two grooms were taking out the horses. Sic transit etc.

CHAPTER 8

Sir William Percy describes Zamorna's anger at the city leaders

It was afternoon, and the hotel was somewhat quieter. I had gone out to get a little cool air in the garden, whose bushy shrubs in some measure screened the sun. Two or three gentlemen were walking there, and in an arbour I found Sir William Percy.

"Well, Colonel, where did you put yourself this morning while that dust was kicking up?"

"O, I got the snugest possible corner in the court-house. I witnessed the whole spectacle quite at my ease. Very good sport for winter; rather too active for these dog-days. How the canaille did run! What will your brother say when he hears of their rout?"

"Bah — swear himself to the bottomless pit and then call for a drop of brandy to cool his tongue! But Townshend, don't I look very languid? quite stived up [deprived of fresh air], to use a classical phrase?"

"Can't say but you do. The heat seems to have overpowered you."

"Well it may. Ever since noon, I've been in the presence of the Great Mogul."

"What, of Zamorna?"

"No other. He sent for a whole lot of us into the great dining room; and then, when I and Stuartville and Thornton and Sydenham and Walker and a dozen more went in, he was striding up and down from the fire-place to the window with a face ten times blacker than the smoke from Edward's tobacco-pipe. He just stood and put his hand on the long table when we came in, each man doffing his castor and bowing at the door. He never asked us to sit down, but let us stand at the lower end, like four and twenty honey-pots all of a row. He began by asking Lord Stuartville if the troops were gone back to their quarters. Stuartville stepped forward a pace and made answer that they were, with the exception of a small detachment which had been left to keep order in a part of the town which as yet seemed scarcely settled. 'Then,' his grace continued, as coldly as you please, 'I must say, my lord, I have been a good deal surprised at the state of dissatisfaction in which I have found the province under your lieutenancy.' And without softening this pretty sentence by another word he stopped for an answer.

"Stuartville said very plainly, 'he believed there was a strong feeling in the minds of the people against the Earl of Northangerland.' 'Allow me to put your meaning in other words,' said his grace. 'There seems to me to be a strong feeling in the minds of the people that they have a right to dictate how, when, where, to whom and on what subject they will. Let it be your business, and that of the gentlemen behind you, to subdue this feeling; to shew those who entertain it the fallacy and danger of acting upon it.' General Thornton remarked that they had done their best, he thought, that morning. The answer he received proved to him that this idea was all a delusion. 'I have not seen your conduct in that light,' said the Mogul. 'Ordinary vigilance on the part of the city authorities would have prevented the assemblage of such a mass of scum. Ordinary decision would have broken into firewood the staff of that banner which in your town was this day insolently hoisted over my head.' He made another of his frozen pauses, and then asked if the Mayor of Zamorna was present. Mr Maude bowed and came forward. 'Your police is lax,' began his grace without a word of civility. 'Your Corporation is indolent, and ought to be overhauled. Every thing indicates disorder, negligence and misrule. If I do not find a speedy change for the better, I shall consider it my duty to set on foot measures for depriving your city of its corporate privileges.'

"There fell another pause, in the course of which Mr Sydenham said 'he believed his grace judged the town too hardly. It was his opinion that the feeling manifested that day was no proof of disloyalty, but the contrary.' At this speech the Duke scowled like a Saracen. Fixing his eyes on Sydenham he said, 'Favour me by keeping that opinion to yourself while you remain in this room. I never yet admitted the value of the loyalty which would dictate the choice of my private friends, or control the course of my private actions. It was not on that condition I accepted the crown of Angria — and how long will it take you to learn that when I became a monarch I did not cease to be a man? Your country put into my hands the splendour and power of royalty, but I did not offer in exchange the freedom and independence of private life.' Nobody answered him and, after another of his pauses, he began dictating again. 'Lord Stuartville, Zamorna has not done well under your Lieutenancy. In this capacity you have disappointed my expectations. I must supersede you if you do not act with greater vigour.' Stuartville coloured high and said, much moved, 'Your Grace shall be anticipated. From this moment I resign my office. Had I been aware before — .' And, would you believe it, Townshend, here he broke off with a gulp as if he had been choked. Thornton went red too and said he thought all this was far too bad. Our Czar went on: 'Your magistracy have disgraced themselves; one was absent; another was perfectly inactive; and the remaining four shewed neither foresight, resolution, nor energy. Gentlemen, you may go.' And so he turned his back on us, walked up to the window, and we made our exit. Thornton's gone back to Ginnington as surly as a bull; Stuartville flung himself on his break-neck horse and set off at a gallop, which must have brought him to the D-I long since; Sydenham and Walker both mounted the Edwardston stage and are doubtless now drinking d-tion to the sovereign in a bumper of Edward's best; as for me, I came here to take the air and get an appetite for some fricandeau ["a slice of veal or other meat ... served with sauce" *OED*] I've just ordered."

"Well," said I. "There's a pretty go! And pray, what has become of the Duchess? Do you know whether she's frightened to death?"

"Almost, I daresay. She did look white when the rush began; I heard she turned sick as soon as they got her into Stancliffe's."

"Then you've not seen her?"

"Yes, for a minute; going up the staircase leaning on Richton's arm."

"Did you speak?"

"No. Indeed, she was all but dead then, and neither noticed me nor anybody else. The man is coming to say my fricandeau is ready. Townshend, will you walk in and take a snack?"

CHAPTER 9

Zamorna and his wife Mary at Stancliffe's Hotel

Evening drew on at length. Oh, how cool, how balmy its first breeze came sighing, to call away the beams of day-light. Sunset was over; the streets were still and dim; an early moon gazed from heaven on the towers of Zamorna's minster, which fairly lifted its white front and shafted oriel to meet that gaze. The breeze which ushers in evening fluttered the blinds of a large upper saloon at Stancliffe's. Every window was shaded, as if to shut out light and noise and all that could chase repose from that couch in the recess. Sunk among a pile of cushions, a lady lies asleep — pale, with her hair loose, and her figure shewing in its attitude the relaxation of extreme fatigue.

Is that person about to awake her, who is leaning over the couch? Pity there is not another living soul in the room to bid him stand away, and let her sleep! What is the individual smiling at? He seems to find matter for amusement in the exhaustion of that slender form and marble face, and the saintly folding of those little fairy hands. Villain, don't touch her! But with his long fore-finger he is parting the loose hair farther from her forehead, and then he smiles again at what any other person would worship — the open brow, gleaming fair and serene like that of a sculptured Virgin Mary. He takes his unhallowed hands from her for a moment, and puts them in his pocket. Man, you look no fit guardian for that shrine! You break the harmony of the scene. Why don't you go away? All round is so still and dim, and she is so fair, one might think her a saint and this room a consecrated chapel. But while you stand there I defy anybody to soothe their mind with so pious a delusion: a fellow with whiskers and something like moustaches, and so much hair — almost black it looks in this light — that you hardly know whether he has any forehead or not, until all at once he pushes the pile away and then there's an expanse underneath, whose smoothness tells you he's not old enough to be a priest.

Fresh from the stern interview with his Lord Lieutenant and the Corporation, from scenes of an equally iron nature which had followed and occupied him all the afternoon, Zamorna had now sought, in the cool of evening, the apartment to which his Duchess had retired. It was an undefined mixture of feelings that brought him there. Half, he wished to know how she had borne the scene of the morning — a scene so unfitted to her nature. Half, he felt an inclination to repose on her softness faculties worried with the bitter and angry contest of the day. Then, in metaphysical indistinctness, existed, scarce known to himself, the consciousness that it was her connection with him which had thus embroiled him with his people; and he was come now partly to please himself with her beauty, partly to dream away an hour in amiable meditations on the sorcery of female charms and the peril of doting on them too fondly, being guided by them too implicitly.

He drew aside the crimson curtain and let the evening sun shine upon her. He walked softly to and fro in the saloon, and every time he passed her couch turned on her his ardent gaze. That man has now loved Mary Percy longer than he ever loved any woman before, and I daresay her face has by this time become to him a familiar and household face. It may be told, by the way in which his eye seeks the delicate and pallid features and rests on their lines, that he finds settled pleasure in the contemplation. In all moods, at all times, he likes them. Her temper is changeful; she is not continual sunshine; she weeps sometimes, and frets and teases him not unfrequently with womanish jealousies. I don't think another woman lives on earth in whom he would bear these changes for a moment. From her, they almost please him. He finds an amusement in playing with her fears — piquing or soothing them as caprice directs.

She slept still, but now he stoops to wake her. He separated her clasped hands and took one in his own. Disturbed by the movement, she drew that hand hastily and petulantly away, and turned on her couch with a murmur. He laughed, and the laugh woke her. Rising, she looked at him and smiled. Still she seemed weary, and when he placed himself beside her she dropped her head on his shoulder and would have slept again. But the Duke would not permit this: he was come for his evening's amusement, and his evening's amusement he would have, whether she was fit to yield it or not. In answer to his prohibitory and disturbing movements she said, "Adrian, I am tired."

"Too tired to talk to me?" he asked.

"No, Adrian, but let me lean against you."

Still he held her off.

"Come," said he. "Open your eyes and fasten your hair up; it is hanging on your neck like a mermaid's." The Duchess raised her hand to her hair; it was indeed all loose and dishevelled over her shoulders. She got up to arrange it, and the occupation roused her. Having smoothed the auburn braids before a mirror, and touched and retouched her loosened dress till it resumed its usual aspect of fastidious neatness, she walked to the window.

"The sun is gone," said she. "I am too late to see it set." And she pensively smiled as her eye lingered on the soft glory which the sun, just departed, had left in its track. "That is the West!" she exclaimed; and, turning to Zamorna, added quickly, "What if you had been born a great imaginative Angrian?"

"Well, I should have played the fool as I have done by marrying a little imaginative Senegambian."

"And," she continued, talking half to herself and half to him, "I should have had a very different feeling towards you then to what I have now. I should have fancied you cared nothing about my country so far off, with its wide wild woodlands. I should have thought all your heart was wrapt in this land, so fair and rich, teeming with energy and life, but still, Adrian, not with the romance of the West."

"And what do you think now, my Sappho?"

"That you are not a grand awful foreigner absorbed in your kingdom as the grandest land of the earth, looking at me as an exotic, listening to my patriotic rhapsodies as sentimental dreams, but a son of Senegambia as I am a daughter — a thousand times more glorious to me, because you are the most glorious thing my own land ever flung from her fire-fertilized soil! I looked at you when those Angrians were howling round you today, and remembered that you were my countryman, not theirs — and all at once their alien senses, their foreign hearts, seemed to have discerned something uncongenial in you, the great stranger, and they rose under your control, yelling rebelliously."

"Mary!" exclaimed the Duke, laughingly approaching her. "Mary, what ails you this evening? Let me look — is it the same quiet little winsome face I am accustomed to see?" He raised her face and gazed but she turned with a quick movement away.

"Don't, Adrian. I have been dreaming about Percy Hall. When will you let me go there?"

"Any time. Set off to-night if you please."

"That is nonsense, and I am serious. I must go sometime — but you never let do anything I wish."

"Indeed! You dared not say so, if you were not far too much indulged."

"Let me go, and come with me in about a month when you have settled matters at Adrianapolis — promise, Adrian."

"I'll let you go willingly enough," returned Zamorna, sitting down and beginning to look vexatious. "But as for asking me to leave Angria again for at least a year and a day — none but an over-fondled wife would think of preferring an unreasonable request."

"It is not unreasonable, and I suppose you want me to leave you? I'd never allow you to go fifteen hundred miles if I could help it."

"No," returned his grace. "Nor fifteen hundred yards either. You'd keep me like a china ornament in your drawing-room. Come, dismiss that pet³⁹! What is it all about?"

"Adrian, you look so scornful."

He took up a book which lay in the window-seat, and began to read. The Duchess stood a while looking at him, and knitting her arched and even brows. He turned over page after page, and by the composure of his brow expressed interest in what he was reading and an intention to proceed. Her Grace is by no means the victim of caprice, though now and then she seems daringly to play with weapons few besides would venture to handle. On this occasion her tact, so nice as to be infallible, informed her that the pet was carried far enough. She sat down, then, by Zamorna's side; leant over and looked at the book; it was poetry — a volume of Byron. Her attention, likewise, was arrested; and she continued to read, turning the page with her slender, after looking into the Duke's face at the conclusion of each leaf to see if he was ready to proceed. She was so quiet, her hair so softly fanned his cheek as she leaned her head towards him, the contact of her gentle hand now and then touching his, of her smooth and silken dress, was so endearing, that it quickly appeased the incipient ire her whim of perverseness had raised; and when, in about half an hour, she ventured to close the obnoxious volume and take it from his hand, the action met with no resistance — nothing but a shake of the head, half-reproving, half-indulgent.

Little more was said by either Duke or Duchess, or at least their further conversation was audible to no mortal ear. The shades of dusk were gathering in the room; the very latest beam of sunset was passing from its gilded walls. They sat in the deep recess of the window side by side, a cloudless moon looking down from the sky upon them and lighting their faces with her smile. Mary leant her happy head on a breast she thought she might trust — happy in that belief, even though it were a delusion. Zamorna had been kind, even fond, and, for aught she knew, faithful, ever since their last blissful meeting at Adrianapolis, and she had learnt how to rest in his arms with a feeling of security, not trembling lest when she most needed the support it might all at once be torn away. During their late visit to Northangerland he had shewn her marked attention, conscious that tenderness bestowed on her was the surest method of soothing her father's heart, and words could not express half the rapture of her feelings when, more than once, seated between the Earl and Duke on such an evening as this, she had perceived that both regarded her as the light and hope of their lives. Language had not revealed this to her. Her father is a man of few words on sentimental matters; her husband, of none at all, though very vigorous in his actions; but Northangerland cheered in her presence, and Zamorna watched her from morning till night, following all her movements with a keen and searching glance.

Is that Hannah Rowley tapping at the door? She says tea is, and Mr Surena impatient to get into the shop again.

THE STORY OF WILLIE ELLIN



PART I

[dated May 1853]

I will not deny that I took a pleasure in studying the character of Mrs Widdup, nor that to me she seemed to possess a good deal of worth of a particular kind. Thirty years ago (our acquaintance dated its commencement thus far back) I had believed very heartily in her worth without studying her character. She then ruled me as one of a flock of four – her nurslings. Of this flock I was not her favourite; indeed my place was lowest in her grace. Even through boyhood and adolescence she held me for a riddle rather than a model. After two decades of separation and more than half a generations' change beheld us again under the same roof, still the housekeeper of Ellin Hall, while respecting its master, revolved him day and night as an unsolved conundrum.

It was and must be so: habit and circumstances attached us, but nothing could combine, nothing quite unfold.

In a certain sense Mrs Widdup was spotlessly honest; she had the fidelity of a consistent and steady nature; she was a partisan in friendship, an unflinching foe; she was usually humane and cheerful. She was narrow-minded, loved money, and by natural instinct still leant to the guidance of interest. Fidelity, partisanship, interest, all counselled her to attachment to the Ellin family, and accordingly she was attached to me, that family's surviving representative.

Ellin Hall had for five ages been the home of the Ellins. In my youth it passed out of their hands. My eldest half-brother sold it. He died suddenly, leaving neither will nor direct heir; his fortune fell to me, and I purchased back the ancient homestead. That eldest half-brother of mine was a stronger man in body and a tyrant in heart. I would advert to his deeds, but they are such as we suffer Death to cancel from memory.

PART II

[dated 22 June 1853]

In other countries, and in distant times, it is possible that more of my kind might have been attracted to human dwellings – hut or mansion – and secretly taken them in lease, than for these hundred years past have been known to make their home in such abodes. Yet we were always few, our presence rare, its signs faint, and its proofs difficult to seize.

My house was not picturesque: it had no turrets, no battlements, no mullioned or lozenge windows. From the first, however, I believe its stones were grey, dug from a grey quarry on a grey waste. They who planned it had loved fresh air, and had chosen a raised site, building it where the green ground swelled highest. Its outlook was free and four-fold: it commanded both sunrise and sunset, and viewed an equal and a wide expanse north and south. These builders, too, preferred solitude to convenience: the village was distant – near enough, perhaps, in summer weather, but remote for a winter's day walk. As to a sentimental peculiarity of the vicinage, I believe the first owners had not known nor reckoned it in their choice of ground. The short, green, flower-bearing turf around covered an ancient burying-ground – so ancient that all the sleepers under the flowers had long ago ceased to be either clay or bone, and were become fine mould, throwing out violets in May, and a carpet of close silken grass all spring, summer, and autumn. These violets were white, and in their season they gathered thickly in a bleached wreath about what seemed a deep-sunk and iron-grey rock – the sole left foundation stone of a forgotten chapel, or the basement of a cross broken away. A quiet gable of the house looked upon this mossy bit of mead. In the lower story of the gable was no aperture, in the upper a single window, having before it a balcony of stone, a peculiarity rare in that neighbourhood, forming indeed the distinctive feature of the house and originating its name – Ellin Balcony.

Who am I? Was I owner of the house? No. Was I its resident tenant, taking it perhaps on lease, and paying the rent? No. Was I a child of the family? No. A servant? No. Ask me no more questions for they are difficult to meet. I was there, and it was my house.

I recollect the first hour that I knew it. I came to consciousness at a moment within the rim of twilight. I came upward out of earth – not downward from heaven, and what first welcomed and seemed to aid me to life was a large disk high over me, a globule, clear, cragged, and desolate. I saw the moon before I could see the sky; but that too, night-veiled and star-inspired, soon opened for me. A sweet silence watched my birth-hour. I took affection for this mossy spot, I stole all through building and nook of land. In the mild beam and pure humidity of a midsummer night I found my seal and sign printed here in dew and there in moonbeam on roof and lawn of Ellin Balcony.

I do not know that ever I was knit with humanity, or was mixed with the mystery of existence as men or women know it. Yet had no mortal relic slumbered near the Balcony, should I have risen? Would Night, my mother, have borne me, unwedded to a certain vital, mortal essence?

Tears had watered this ground; great sorrows and strong feelings had gathered here. Could a colder soil, drenched only with rain and visited only by airs and shadows, have yielded me as its produce?

I even think that some one sleeper threw me out of a great labouring heart which had toiled terribly through his thirty, or sixty, or fourscore years of work, had lived and throbbed strongly, stood still while yet in vigour, and buried, yet warm and scarce arrested, had thrown forth its unslackened glow and ill-checked action in an essence bodiless and incomplete, yet penetrative and subtle.

I believe this because my relations to men were so limited. To millions I felt no tie, found no approach; to tens I might draw gently. Whether units existed that could more actively attract it, yet lay with time and chance to show.

Whoever in my early days were the inmates of Ellin Balcony, on me they made no impression. I knew every stone in the walls. I knew the neighbourhood – the knolls, the lanes, the turfed wastes, all vegetable growth, field flowers, hedge plants, yellow gorse and broom, foxglove springing bright out of stony soil, ivy on ground or wall. I distinguished and now remember these things very well. I

knew the seasons, the faces of summer and winter. Spring and autumn were familiar in their skies; night, day, and the hours were all acquaintances. Storm and fair weather complete my reminiscences. I cannot recall anything human, and yet humanity was in the house. Experience now tells me that it must have been busy, bustling humanity, an alert current of life flowing out after to towns and thickly peopled scenes, returning thence with accessions – life circulating in a free, ordinary channel, never stealing slow under the banks of thought, never winding in deeps, but coursing parallel with populous highways. At last, I suppose, this practical daily life forsook retirement and went permanently away to the towns which were its natural sphere. This departure made no difference to me, except that I remember looking at the sun and listening to the wind with a new holiday feeling of unconstraint.

About this time I first added a cognisance of the individual human being to a vague impression of a human race existing. A solitary old woman became housekeeper of Ellin Balcony. She used to feed a great dog chained in the now empty yard, to close and open shutters, to knit a great deal, and read and think a little. I believe it was because she *did* think, however little, that I had the power to perceive her presence. Those who had lived here before her never thought, and into an existence all material I could not enter.

PART III

I

Old Mrs Hill, the solitary housekeeper of Ellin Balcony, was sitting one day in her kitchen reading a pamphlet-sermon as old as herself, when, just as her kettle began to simmer for tea, she thought she heard a noise like the jar of the iron gate opening from a bridle road which approached the lone house. She held her hand, checked her clicking needles and listened. Was it an arrival? It was no more than the wind, which, when it blew as it now did from the south, could rattle that gate like a hand. Sedately superstitious, Mrs Hill, every day and every night, heard noises about this deserted place which scared her, but, firm-nerved, her fears never passed her lips or affected her movements. She passed the jar over and resumed her stocking.

True, there blew a south wind, but in a low key. It shook nothing; it sighed only along the natural avenue which darkened above a path conducting upward from the gate. At this moment the shadow fell not on the path only, but on a small wayfarer – a child's figure – perhaps a little rustic venturing through this gate and up this tree-dark way as a short cut to the bourn of some errand. Is his garb coloured like the path? Does it make a concord with gravel, moss, tree, stem? Are his cheeks and hands berry-brown and red?

Not at all; the shape is less picturesque. It is civilised and slender, a contrast with adjuncts, not a harmony. The dress was made in a town; the hair is long and waved, the face is fair, the countenance is informed. This seems to be a gentleman schoolboy, perhaps ten years old. He must have walked far to-day; he is footsore, pale, and with a few more miles of pilgrimage would become exhausted. He carries a knapsack, a light burden, but his weary shoulder aches under it. Emerging from the avenue, he halts on the little lawn, and looks at Ellin Balcony.

He has measured the house, surveyed the enclosed ground, glanced down into the wooded valley and up at the barer and greyer hills towards which the Balcony fronts. He approaches the door.

The old lonely knitter was winding the worsted round her ball, and folding her knitting, preparatory to taking off the fire the kettle, which now boiled, when the house thrilled to a knock, a loud though brief knock at the front door. She started – and might well start, for it was the first time she had been thus summoned since she kept the Balcony. She ran amazed, she opened, and saw on the step a boy, well clad but dusty, viewing her from under light-complexioned brows with direct clear blue eyes.

'They call you Mrs Hill?' said he.

He was answered affirmatively.

'And this place is "Ellin Balcony"?'

'Yes.'

'If you please, then, let me pass. I should like to come in; I should like well to come in. I'm tired.'

'But, master —' Mrs Hill paused astonished, as if a sudden light broke on her. She quickly pursued – 'Surely you are not an Ellin of Golpit, surely not the little one – the baby?'

'I'm Willie, that is William Ellin, and I came this very day from Golpit – fifteen miles, a long way. I'm tired.'

Mrs Hill let him pass. She took him to the kitchen, and he sat down in a chair that stood on the hearth.

'You *are* the baby, then?' cried the housekeeper.

'Perhaps I was a baby when you saw me. I hope I'm a boy now.'

'How old. Master Ellin?'

'Ten and a half, but I'm a thin boy.'

'You are thin and white. Have you good health?'

'Capital – when they let me.'

'You are like your mother.'

'Am I like mamma? I'm glad of it!'

'You have her mouth, you speak like her. But what, Master William, brought a child like you alone from Golpit?'

'Several things, Mrs Hill. I can't tell you all in a minute – only here I am, and very hungry and tired.'

'Hungry!' echoed Mrs Hill: 'I'm afraid he is hungry,' and she hastened to get a tray and cups.

Before the boy took his tea he asked his hostess to fasten both outer doors of the house. When this was done he said, 'Now I'm safe,' and proceeded to eat with appetite. The meal over, he lay down on a kind of settle. He folded both hands under his head, but did not close his eyes; he was pale but had no look of langour.

'Mrs Hill,' he resumed, 'you knew my mother?'

'I stayed with her in her last sickness. Master Willie.'

'Had she much pain when she was ill?'

'Sometimes she suffered greatly.'

'Was she patient, or not?'

'She was silent when she suffered, and bore wonderfully.'

'She cared for me, didn't she, Mrs Hill?'

'Beyond words,' said the housekeeper. 'And we all used to think you took greatly to your mamma.'

'Well, I suppose it was so. I was not much more than three years old when she died, but I remember her. I have wanted her always, and I shall be glad when I grow out of the habit of thinking about her, as she can never come back.'

'You must have something of her nature in you,' was the reply, 'and I see you have. But I am afraid you have not found many friends, or your mind would not dwell in this way on a dead person.'

'No more it would, I daresay,' replied the lad.

'Do they treat you well at Golpit, Master Willie?'

'I have run away, Mrs Hill.'

'Child, where do you mean to go to, and what will you do?'

'I shall think about it. You must hide me here for a day or two.'

'What has happened wrong? Do they starve you?'

'Oh no, I get enough to eat, but Edward's hand and stick are so heavy.'

'Ah! Mr Ellin never liked either you or your mother.'

'I believe he was a cruel stepson, Mrs Hill – he still speaks so savagely about mamma at times.'

'And does he strike you, child?'

'If he thinks me slow in the business, which I find dry and hard enough to learn, he knocks my head about till it aches. It is very seldom that I cry, but if I look dull after punishment, he calls me a disaffected rebel, and strikes again. Last night he had been making bargains, and had taken some brandy and water. He knocked me down with a stool, for no particular reason that I know of, unless it is that in some moods he hates the sight of me. My temple was cut with the sharp corner of the stool. I wish, Mrs Hill, you would give me a little warm water to wash it. It is sore and burning now, after my long walk.'

The housekeeper soon brought him a basin of water. She wished to aid him, but he took the sponge himself, and pushing aside his fair brown hair, discovered in the blue-veined temple a rough laceration and dark bruise – it was now darkened with blood – but he soon washed it clean, and then Mrs Hill bound it up carefully.

'My lamb,' said she, compassionately, 'this is wicked work.'

'Old lady, I am not a lamb,' replied the boy, while his eyes laughed. 'And after all it is not so much the knock I think about. I did not run away on that account.'

'What could it be for?'

'Because Edward threatened me with something I really should dread. It seems I am quite in his power, as my parents left me no money.'

'I know, child. Your stepbrother's property came to him in his mother's, your father's first wife's, right. You are dependent on him, as they say.'

'Yes, and he tells me he will bring me up as becomes a beggar – he will make me a shop apprentice. I can't bear it, Mrs Hill.'

The old lady shook her head, and looked somewhat at a loss for a response.

'I can't bear it. I don't want to live with shop boys, and stand behind a counter. My mother was a lady – I ought to be a gentleman.'

'But you've no money; you can't choose. You must learn a trade.'

'We have never had traders in our family for I don't know how long till Edward out of greediness went into business. My father and grandfather and great-grandfather lived here at Ellin Balcony and farmed their own land, and were squires.'

'Yes, and lessened their income little by little. Ellin Balcony would have had to be sold if your brother had not removed into premises at Golpit, and gone, as you say, into business.'

'Would it?'

'Aye; and mind me, you can't do better than follow his example. Would he take you into his own counting house?'

'I should be so miserable.'

The poor lad groaned.

'But, remember,' said Mrs Hill, with much sympathy, but also with deep warning in her tone, 'you are without friends, Master Willie. Edward is your only chance: displease him as little and obey him as much as you can.'

'Can't I go to sea, or be a soldier?'

'You can't – indeed you can't.'

'But Edward is cruel, Mrs Hill; he persecutes me, I think. I don't complain much, I don't tell you all, but indeed I hardly know how to go on living as I have lived for some years.'

'You must look to God – you must, my poor child. It is all that sufferers, whether grown up or little ones, can do in this weary world.'

'I wonder if mamma knows about me, Mrs Hill? I sometimes hope not, lest she should be unhappy in Heaven.'

'Do you say your prayers at night? Have they ever taught you to pray?'

'Yes,' said he briefly. 'They never taught me – that is, Edward and his wife never taught me my prayers, but I learnt them of mamma, and remember them yet.'

'Don't forget them. Will you go to bed now?'

'Yes, if you please. I'm tired.'

After Mrs Hill had taken the child upstairs and shown him his room, containing a spare bed she always kept dry and aired, he came to the staircase head, and called out anxiously, yet quietly:

'Lock the doors fast, Mrs Hill. Let nobody in, and tell nobody there is a strange boy in the house.'

She promised accordingly.

Worn out with fatigue, he slept till late the next morning. He had not yet risen when the iron gate clashed back and a gig drove furiously up the avenue. In an instant a man athletic and red-whiskered bounded to the yard pavement, entered the kitchen door, and seemed to take house and housekeeper by storm.

'Where is the cub? I tracked him here by sure marks, so let us have no lies. Where is he?'

'Mr Ellin, what can you mean?'

Mr Ellin held up a clenched fist in the old woman's face, shook it between her two eyes, pronounced an oath, and dashed upstairs.

There were seven bedrooms. He tried the doors of six – they yielded. He entered, and found empty rooms. Testing the seventh door, he found that it resisted his hand – a drawn bolt opposed him.

'Run down!' said he. 'I have him now. William Ellin!'

'Yes, Edward,' said a child's voice.

'Open this door!' (Oath accompanying).

'I would open it directly if you would promise not to strike – at least, not hard.'

For answer the great athlete vigorously shook the slight door.

'I promise!' he yelled. 'I'll see you,' etc.

Silence within. Again the door was made to quiver.

'If you will not promise,' recommended the treble organ, uttered in an awe-pierced yet not timid key, 'I must defend.'

'Defend? What do you mean? Open if you value your life.'

'I do value my life, so I shall make a barricade,' was answered, and a dragging sound followed as of furniture moved. The child seemed quietly planning to resist this terrible besieger. Hereupon Goliath foamed at the mouth. Strong hand and heavy shoulder were both made to bear upon the door. It heaved, creaked, swayed. Below knelt Mrs Hill on the landing praying for pardon and forbearance. She might as well have implored stone. Ere long hinge, lock, panels yielded, the whole door crashed in, and thrusting aside an interposed chest of drawers, Edward Ellin sprang upon his young brother. Down went the child before the onslaught, but he got up soon on one knee, and his blue eye did not fall – it rose. Over him flourished the gig whip. He looked at the lash.

'Not too hard this time,' said he in a low voice, inexplicably quiet and steady. 'I have considered, and mean to do my best at a trade.'

The wicked man's arm stiffened its muscles; the cruel lash vibrated, but it did not fall. There was a Providence watching over that poor little Samuel kneeling on the floor in his scant night-shirt.

A voice spoke behind.

'Ellin – not so. I'll not see that done,' declared accents manlier and mellow than those of the husky ruffian. 'Whatever the lad may be, he is not strong enough for the discipline of a gig whip. Let him go.'

The speaker was the second occupant of the gig. Mrs Hill's cries and the breakage of the door had called him upon the scene of action. He looked at this moment a capable protector. He was a handsome man, as powerful as Ellin; and his face, his eye, his voice, attested that by him power would never be abused to cruelty. There might be a certain command about him, but it was unmingled with any propensity to oppress. Many a murderer has owned the light savage eye, the sensual traits, the strong jaw, massive neck, and full red whisker of Edward Ellin. No criminal ever displayed in a dock the countenance, bearing, feature and glance of Mr Bosas.

'Come, Ellin, be calm,' said this last. 'Give me that whip; I'll take care of it.'

The person addressed looked ready to pour out oaths, and indeed forth they rushed, but not on his dark-eyed pleasant opponent. Little Willie bore the brunt of the storm, or would have borne it had not Bosas stepped between.

'Dress yourself,' said he to the boy, speaking sharply but not unkindly. He was obeyed in haste. William meantime still eyed with dread, but no poltroonery, the bull kept at bay by the man. He washed his face and hands too, and as he wiped them on a towel, he looked up at his friend, and said, with a curious kind of resigned endurance, 'After all, sir, do not give yourself too much trouble. I've had that whip before, and shall have it again when you're gone.'

'I hope not,' said the gentleman gravely. 'Come, Ellin, promise me you'll let him off this time.'

Ellin made no promise and gave no answer for some minutes; then, as if his mood had changed suddenly, he burst out laughing, and said –

'Pooh, pooh! I'm only in joke; I'll not touch him. Willie knows me well enough. I'm a passionate fellow, but good-natured.'

'You forgive him, then?' said the mediator.

'Oh, to be sure. I owed the little booby no grudge. Let him play truant no more, and come home quietly now – that is all.'

'Very well. You agree, don't you, my little fellow?' said the dark-faced but kind man.

He spoke without turning to the child. If he had seen him at that moment perhaps the current of his own thoughts might have changed, perhaps an intention might have entered his mind which for the present did not occur to him. But Fate sat in the air invisible at her cloudy wheel. She span on impassive, unravelling no knot in her wool. It was in vain that Willie turned sheet-white, and, for an instant, heart-sick. No man regarded, or could read what a lot the child foresaw. He put neither his thoughts nor his forebodings into words. Prescient but long-suffering, he went back to Golpit that morning.

II

Mr Bosas was no resident at Golpit. He lived, indeed, a great way off in a capital city. Notwithstanding his foreign-sounding name, he was English born, but report ascribed to him a Hebrew origin. There was nothing, indeed, of the Jew in his countenance or eye, yet in his features some of the handsomer lines of Israel's race were perhaps traceable, and might he have worn a beard, curls, rich, dark, and Eastern would have graced his chin.

Between Bosas and Ellin existed mercantile relations, for the former was in business too; and as he was the merchant who bought Ellin's manufactured goods for export, and possessed besides, in his superior wealth and commercial standing, the power of either obliging or injuring to an important extent, Ellin held him in respect, and treated him almost with subservience. Hence the ready concession to his will in the matter of Willie; and for this reason, too, during the two days Mr Bosas continued a guest at Golpit, his protégé remained unmolested.

Perhaps Willie expected this respite would last no longer than the kind merchant's stay; perhaps he wished to express as much; but if so he never found his opportunity to put in a quiet word, nor had he the chance of renewing or conforming an awakened interest at parting. Shortly before Mr Bosas' departure Willie had been sent out on an errand, and when he returned his advocate was gone.

The lad had a small room he called his own. It was only a kind of garret, and contained but a crib and a stool. Yet, such as it was, he preferred it before the smart drawing-room, two floors below. If his poor tossed life numbered any peaceful associations, they were all connected with this cold, narrow nest under the slates. Hither he retired early, on the night after Bosas' departure – rather wondering to himself that nothing had yet befallen him, even dimly conceiving a hope that perhaps his brother for once had sincerely pardoned. It was half-past eight of a summer evening, not yet dusk, consequently Willie had brought a book with him, and sitting near the little window he could read. A year ago some love of reading had dawned in his mind. The taste had not been much cultivated, but it throve

on scant diet full as much as was healthful. At present he liked *Robinson Crusoe* as well as any book in the world. *Robinson Crusoe* was his present study.

His thoughts were all in the desolate island, when he heard a step mounting the ladder staircase to his room. It pressed almost the last round ere any more disturbing idea struck him than that it must be wearing late, as the maids – who also lodged in the attics – were coming to bed. Suddenly he felt a weight in the tread which forbade the supposition of a female foot. The wooden steps shook, his door shook too; it opened, and a shape six feet high, broad and rather corpulent, entered.

Willie had never, till now, seen his brother enter his chamber alone by night. In all his trials he had never been visited thus in darkness, and in secret. I should not, perhaps, say in darkness, for the hour was shared between two gleams – twilight and moonlight. It was a very pleasant night, quite calm and warm, and only a few faint clouds, gilded and lightly electric, curled mellow round the moon. The door was shut, the thin child sat on his stool, the giant man stood over him.

‘I have you safe at last, and I’ll very nearly finish you now,’ were the first words, spoken in rough adult tones. None must expect qualified language or measured action from Mr Edward Ellin. He stood there strong, brutal, and ungovernable, and as an ungoverned brute he meant to behave.

The boy pleaded only once.

‘Wait till to-morrow,’ said he. ‘Don’t flog me here, and in the night-time. Do it to-morrow in the counting house.’

But his step-brother answered by turning up the cuff of his coat, showing a thick wrist not soon to be wearied. He had brought with him the gig whip. He lifted and flourished it on high. This was the rejoinder.

PART IV

[undated, c. June 1853]

‘Stop,’ said the expectant victim earnestly – so very earnestly that the executioner did stop, demanding, however, ‘What am I to stop for? It’s no use whining – sooner or later you shall have your deserts – you’ve run away and you shall pay for it.’

‘But mind how you make me pay, Edward. A grown-up man like you should be reasonable. That whip is heavy, and I am only moderately strong. If you strike me in great anger you may cut deeper than you think.’

‘What then? Who cares?’

‘If I were to be more hurt than you think of? If you had to be taken before a magistrate and pay a fine or be transported?’ suggested Willie.

The idea was an unlucky one. The whole bearing of the boy was antipathetic because incomprehensible to the gross nature under influence. Mr Ellin growled fury in his throat.

‘Insolent beggar!’ said he; ‘so you threaten me with fines and magistrates? Take that! and that! – &c.’

He had fallen to work. It seemed he liked his business, for he continued at its exercise what seemed a long, a very long time. The worst of it was, Willie would not scream, he would not cry. A few loud shrieks, a combative struggle, a lusty roar, might probably have done wonders in abridging Mr Ellin’s pleasure; but nothing in the present case interrupted or checked him, and he indulged freely. At last there came a gasp – the child sunk quite down – the man stopped. Through the silence breathed some utterance of pain – a moan or two – the slightest sound to which suffering Nature could be restricted; but in its repression only too significant. It induced Mr Ellin to say,

‘I hope you have had enough now.’

He was not answered.

‘Let me see you play truant again, or wheedle Bosas, and I’ll double the dose.’

No reply – and no sob – perhaps no tear.

‘Will you speak?’

The flogger seemed half-frightened, for Willie’s exhausted attitude proved that he had indeed received enough; possibly he might have swooned, which would be troublesome.

But this was not the case. He spoke as soon as the severe pain of that last cut permitted him.

‘I cannot bear any more to-night,’ said he.

Ellin believed him – told him to go either to bed now or to – another place, whistled and walked off.

By and by, after Willie was left alone, he gathered himself up. It would have been sad to watch him undress and creep painfully to his crib, and sadder to read his thoughts. Scarce an interjection and not a word passed his lips; for some time scarce a tear wet his eyelashes. He had lain sleepless and suffering for over an hour ere there came any gush that could relieve; but at last the water sprung, the sobs thickened, his little handkerchief was drawn from under his pillow – he wept into it freely – then he murmured something about his life being very, very hard and difficult to bear. At last, and after a long pause, he slowly got on his knees – he seemed to be praying – though there were neither lifted eyes nor clasped hands nor audible words to denote supplication – nothing indeed but the attitude and a concentrated, abstracted expression of countenance, denoting a mind withdrawn into an unseen sphere, preoccupied with viewless intercourse. As he returned to earth, his eyes, hitherto dosed, slowly opened. He lay down; probably he believed his petition heard; composure breathed rest upon him; he slumbered.

Willie cannot take rank as a saint – his patience was constitutional, as his religion was instinctive. Temperance in his expression of suffering was with him an idiosyncrasy. Prayer was a need of his almost hopeless circumstances. Oppressed by man, Nature whispered him, ‘Appeal to God,’ and he obeyed. Some think prayers are rarely answered; and yet there have been penetrating prayers that have seemed to pass unchallenged all gates and hosts and pierced at once within the veil.

PART V

The man of bad propensities withdrew. William was left kneeling at his cribside, his face and hands pressed against the mattress. He had been severely flogged, and for a time felt sick, but he was not maimed or dangerously hurt – not corporeally maimed. How his heart fared is another question.

It might seem that the watchful care of God had temporarily been withdrawn from this orphan, as he shrank powerless to resist under a tyrannic hand – as he afterwards moaned alone, pale, faint, miserably though not passionately weeping, compelling himself, according to the bent of his idiosyncrasy, to a sort of heroic temperance of expression, even in extremity of grief. In man's judgment it might be deemed that this child was forgotten where even the fledgling dropped from the nest is remembered. William himself feared as much. There was great darkness over his eyes, and a terrible ice chilled his hopes – his very hearing was suspended. He did not now catch an ascending step on the ladder, nor notice the door once more opening. It required the near glare of candle-light to snatch him even transiently from himself and his anguish.

The hand which brought the candle placed it on the narrow window-sill. Some one then approached Willie, sat down beside him on the edge of the crib; an arm passed round him, another arm drew him towards a warm shoulder, lips kissed his forehead, and eyes wept on his neck.

'Poor boy! Poor wronged child!'

The voice uttering these words belonged to an age not many years beyond Willie's own: the speaker seemed a girl of seventeen, blooming, and with features which, if they borrowed at this moment interest of pity, gave back in return beauty distinct, undoubted, undenied. Fine indeed were the eyes which dropped tears on Willie, and all lovely the arms, the hands, the lips by which he was protected and soothed.

'I heard what has happened – heard it from my room below. I fear you are terribly hurt?' said she.

'I don't care for the pain – my mind suffers the most,' the boy declared with a groan. This sudden transfer from terror to tenderness relaxed for one instant the power of self-control.

'Hush, my love, my child! Hush, Willie, forget him: he shall never hurt you more,' said the young comforter, rocking the sufferer in her arms and cradling him on her breast.

Softened even while relieved, Willie wept fast and free and was soon easier. By gentle hands he was helped to bed, he was lovingly watched till he slept, he was kissed in his slumbers; and then the guardian withdrew, only to think of him through the night, to listen against molestation, and to be prepared at one menacing symptom to come out resolved to defend.

ALBION AND MARINA



A tale by Lord Wellesley

PREFACE

I have written this tale out of malignity for the injuries that have lately been offered to me. Many parts, especially the former, were composed under a mysterious influence that I cannot account for.

My reader will easily recognise the characters through the thin veil which I have thrown over them. I have considerably flattered Lady Zenobia Zelzia Ellrington. She is not nearly so handsome as I have represented her, and she strove far more vigorously to oust some one from another person's good graces than I say. But her endeavours failed. Albion has hitherto stood firm. What he will do I cannot pretend to even guess; but I think that Marina's incomparable superiority will prevail over her Frenchified rival, who, as all the world knows, is a miller, jockey, talker, bluestocking, charioteer, and beldam united in one....

The conclusion is wholly destitute of any foundation in truth, and I did it out of revenge. Albion and Marina are both alive and well for aught I know.

One thing, however, will certainly break my heart, and that is the admission of any scandal against Tree (the publisher); but I hope my readers will pardon me for it, as I promise to make amends with usury next time I write a book.

C. Wellesley

October 12th, 1830

I wrote this in four hours. C.B.

CHAPTER I

Albion

There is a certain sweet little pastoral village in the south of England with which I am better acquainted than most men. The scenery around it possesses no distinguished characteristic of romantic grandeur or wildness that might figure to advantage in a novel, to which high title this brief narrative sets up no pretensions.

Neither rugged lofty rocks, nor mountains dimly huge, mark with frowns the undisturbed face of nature; but little peaceful valleys, low hills crowned with wood, murmuring cascades and streamlets, richly cultivated fields, farmhouses, cottages, and a wide river, form all the scenic features. And every hamlet has one or more great men.

This had one and he was 'na-sheep-shanks'. Every ear in the world had heard of his fame, and every tongue could bear testimony to it. I shall name him the Duke of Strathelleraye, and by that name the village was likewise denominated.

For more than thirty miles around every inch of ground belonged to him and every man was his retainer.

The magnificent villa, or rather palace, of this noble, stood on an eminence, surrounded by a vast park and the embowering shade of an ancient wood, proudly seeming to claim the allegiance of all the countryside.

The mind, achievements, and character of its great possessor, must not, can not, be depicted by a pen so feeble as mine; for though I could call filial love and devoted admiration to my aid, yet both would be utterly ineffective.

Though the duke seldom himself came among his attached vassals, being detained elsewhere by important avocations, yet his lady the duchess resided in the castle constantly. Of her I can only say that she was like an earthly angel. Her mind was composed of charity, beneficence, gentleness, and sweetness. All, both old and young, loved her; and the blessings of those that were ready to perish came upon her evermore.

His Grace had also two sons, who often visited Strathelleraye.

Of the youngest, Lord Cornelius, everything is said when I inform the reader that he was seventeen years of age, grave, sententious, stoical, rather haughty and sarcastic, of a fine countenance though somewhat swarthy; that he had long thick hair black as the hood's wing; and liked nothing so well as to sit in moody silence musing over the vanity of human affairs, or improving and expanding his mind by the abstruse study of the higher branches of mathematics, and that sublime science astronomy.

The eldest son, Albion, Marquis of Tagus, is the hero of my present tale. He had entered his nineteenth year; his stature was lofty; his form equal in the magnificence of its proportions to that of Apollo Belvedere. The bright wealth of curls of his rich brown hair waved over a forehead of the purest marble in the placidity of its unveined whiteness. His nose and mouth were cast in the most perfect mould. But saw I never anything to equal his eye! Oh! I could have stood riveted with the chains of admiration gazing for hours upon it! What clearness, depth, and lucid transparency in those large orbs of radiant brown! And the fascination of his smile was irresistible, though seldom did that sunshine of the mind break through the thoughtful and almost melancholy expression of his noble features. He was a soldier, captain in the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards, and all his attitudes and actions were full of martial grace. His mental faculties were in exact keeping with such an exterior, being of the highest order; and though not like his younger brother, wholly given up to study, yet he was well versed in the ancient languages, and deeply read in the Greek and Roman classics, in addition to the best works in the British, German, and Italian tongues.

Such was my hero. The only blot I was ever able to discover in his character was that of a slight fierceness or impetuosity of temper which sometimes carried him beyond bounds, though at the slightest look or word of command from his father he instantly bridled his passion and became perfectly calm.

No wonder the duke should be, as he was, proud of such a son.

CHAPTER II

Marina

About two miles from the castle there stood a pretty house, entirely hid from view by a thick forest, in a glade of which it was situated. Behind it was a smooth lawn fringed with odoriferous shrubs, and before it a tasteful flower garden.

This was the abode of Sir Alured Angus, a Scotchman, who was physician to His Grace, and though of gentlemanly manners and demeanour, yet harsh, stern, and somewhat querulous in countenance and disposition.

He was a widower, and had but one child, a daughter, whom I shall call Marina, which nearly resembles her true name.

No wild rose blooming in solitude, or bluebell peering from an old wall, ever equalled in loveliness this flower of the forest. The hue of her cheek would excel the most delicate tint of the former, even when its bud is just opening to the breath of summer, and the clear azure of her eyes would cause the latter to appear dull as a dusky hyacinth. Also, the silken tresses of her hazel hair straying in light ringlets down a neck and forehead of snow seemed more elegant than the young tendrils of a vine. Her dress was almost Quaker-like in its simplicity. Pure white or vernal green were the colours she constantly wore, without any jewels save one row of pearls round her neck. She never stirred beyond the precincts of the wooded and pleasant green lane which skirted a long cornfield near the house. There on warm summer evenings she would ramble and linger listening to the woodlark's song, and occasionally join her own more harmonious voice to its delightful warblings.

When the gloomy days and nights of autumn and winter did not permit these walks she amused herself with drawings (for which she had an exact taste), playing on the harp, reading the best English, French, and Italian works (all of which languages she understood) in her father's extensive library, and sometimes a little light needlework.

Thus in a state of almost perfect seclusion (for seldom had she even Sir Alured's company, as he generally resided in London) she was quite happy, and reflected with innocent wonder on those who could find pleasure in the noisy delights of what is called 'fashionable society'....

One day, as Lady Strathellerraye was walking in the wood she met Marina, and on learning who she was, being charmed with her beauty and sweet manners, invited her to go on the morrow to the castle. She did so, and there met the Marquis of Tagus. He was even more surprised and pleased with her than the duchess, and when she was gone he asked his mother many questions about her, all of which she answered to his satisfaction.

For some time afterwards he appeared listless and abstracted. The reader will readily perceive that he had, to use a cant phrase, 'fallen in love'.

Lord Cornelius, his brother, warned him of the folly of doing so, but instead of listening to his sage admonitions he first strove to laugh, and then frowning at him commanded silence.

In a few days he paid a visit to Oakwood House (Sir Alured's mansion), and after that became more gloomy than before.

His father observed this, and one day as they were sitting alone remarked it to Albion, adding that he was fully acquainted with the reason.

Albion reddened but made no answer.

'I am not, my son', continued the duke, 'opposed to your wishes, though certainly there is a considerable difference of rank between yourself and Marina Angus, but that difference is compensated by the many admirable qualities she possesses'.

On hearing these words, Arthur – Albion I mean – started up, and throwing himself at his father's feet, poured fourth his thanks in terms of glowing gratitude, while his fine features, flushed with excitement, spoke even more eloquently. tHan his eloquent words.

'Rise, Albion!', said the duke, 'you are worthy of her and she of you; but both are yet too young. Some years must elapse before your union takes place; therefore exert your patience, my son'.

Albion's joy was slightly damped by this news, but his thankfulness and filial obedience as well as love forced him to acquiesce, and immediately after he quitted the room and took his way to Oakwood House.

There he related the circumstances to Marina, who, though she blushed incredulously, yet in truth felt as much gladness and as great a relief from doubt almost amounting to despair as himself.

CHAPTER III GLASSTOWN

A few months afterwards the Duke of Strathelleraye determined to visit that wonder of the world, the great city of Africa: the Glass Town, of whose splendour, magnificence, and extent, strength and riches, occasional tidings came from afar, wafted by breezes of the ocean to Merry England.

But to most of the inhabitants of that little isle it bore the character of a dream or gorgeous fiction. They were unable to comprehend how mere human beings could construct fabrics of such a marvellous size and grandeur as many of the public buildings were represented to be; and as to the 'Tower of all the Nations', few believed in its existence. It seemed as the cities of old: Nineveh or Babylon with the temples of their gods, Ninus or Jupiter Belus, and their halls of Astarté and Semalt. These most people believe to be magnified by the dim haze of intervening ages, and the exaggerating page of history through which medium we behold them.

The duke, as he had received many invitations from the Glass Townians, who were impatient to behold one whose renown had spread so far, and who likewise possessed vast dominions near the African coast, informed his lady, the Marquis of Tagus, and Lord Cornelius, that in a month's time he should take his departure with them, and that he should expect them all to be prepared at that period, adding that when they returned Marina Angus should be created Marchioness of Tagus.

Though it was a bitter trial to Albion to part with one to whom he was now so entirely devoted, yet, comforted by the last part of his father's speech, he obeyed without murmuring.

On the last evening of his stay in Strathelleraye he took a sad farewell of Marina, who wept as if hopeless; but suddenly restraining her griefs she looked up, with her beautiful eyes irradiated by a smile that like a ray of light illuminated the crystal tears, and whispered:

'I shall be happy when you return'.

Then they parted; and Albion during his voyage over the wide ocean often thought for comfort on her last words.

It is a common superstition that the words uttered by a friend on separating are prophetic, and these certainly portended nothing but peace.

CHAPTER IV LITERARY AMBITIONS

In due course of time they arrived at the Glass Town, and were welcomed with enthusiastic cordiality.

After the duke had visited his kingdom he returned to the chief metropolis and established his residence there at Salamanca Palace.

The Marquis of Tagus from the noble beauty of his person attracted considerable attention wherever he went, and in a short period he had won and attached many faithful friends of the highest rank and abilities.

From his love of elegant literature and the fine arts in general, painters and poets were soon among his warmest admirers. He himself possessed a most sublime genius, but as yet its full extent was unknown to him.

One day as he was meditating alone on the world of waters that rolled between him and the fair Marina, he determined to put his feelings on paper in a tangible shape that he might hereafter show them to her when anticipation had given place to fruition. He took his pen, and in about a quarter of an hour had completed a brief poem of exquisite beauty. The attempt pleased him and soothed the anguish that lingered in his heart. It likewise gave him an insight into the astonishing faculties of his own mind; and a longing for immortality, an ambition of glory, seized him.

He was a devoted worshipper of the divine works that the Grecian tragedians have left for all succeeding ages to marvel at, particularly those of Sophocles the Majestic; and his mind was deeply imbued with the spirit of their eagle-flights into higher regions than that of earth or even Parnassus.

Being now sensible in a degree of his lofty powers, he determined, like Milton, to write somewhat that the traditionary muses would not willingly let die, and accordingly commenced a tragedy entitled: 'Necropolis, or the City of the Dead'. Here was set forth in a strain of the grandest mind the mysteries of ancient Egyptian worship, and he has acknowledged to me that he felt his being absorbed while he wrote it, even by the words himself had made.

Sublime is this surprising production! It is indeed, in the words of an eminent writer (Captain Tree), 'a noble instance of the almost perfectibility of human intellect'; but there hovers over it a feeling of tender melancholy, for the image of Marina haunted his thoughts, and Amalthea, his heroine, is but an impersonation of her.

This tragedy wreathed the laurels of fame round his brow, and his after-productions, each of which seemed to excel the other, added new wreaths to those which already beautified his temples.

I cannot follow him in the splendour of his literary career, nor even mention so much as the titles of his various works. Suffice it to say he became one of the greatest poets of the age; and one of the chief motives that influenced him in his exertions for renown was to render himself worthy to possess such a treasure as Marina. She in whatever he was employed was never out of his thoughts, and none had he as yet beheld among all the ladies of his Glass Town – though rich, titled, and handsome strove by innumerable arts to gain his favour – whom he could ever compare with her.

CHAPTER V

LADY ZELZIA ELLRINGTON

One evening Albion was invited to the house of Earl Cruchan, where was a large party assembled. Among the guests was one lady apparently about twenty –five or twenty –six years of age. In figure she was very tall, and both it and her face were of a perfectly Roman cast. Her features were regularly and finely formed, her full and brilliant eyes jetty black, as were the luxuriant tresses of her richly –curled hair. Her dark glowing complexion was set off by a robe of crimson velvet trimmed with ermine, and a nodding plume of black ostrich feathers added to the imposing dignity of her appearance.

Albion, notwithstanding her unusual comeliness, hardly noticed her till Earl Cruachan rose and introduced her to him as the Lady Zelzia Ellrington.

She was the most learned and noted woman in Glass Town, and he was pleased with this opportunity of seeing her.

For some time she entertained him with a discourse of the most lively eloquence, and indeed madame de Staël herself could not have gone beyond Lady Zelzia in the conversational talent; and on this occasion she exerted herself to the utmost, as she was in the presence of so distinguished a man, and one whom she seemed ambitious to please.

At length one of the guests asked her to favour the company with a song and tune on the grand piano. At first she refused, but on Albion seconding the request rose, and taking from the drawing-room table a small volume of poems opened it at one by the Marquis of Tagus. She then set it to a fine air and sang as follows, while she skilfully accompanied her voice upon the instrument:

I think of thee when the moonbeams play
On the placid water's face;
For thus thy blue eys' lustrous ray
Shone with resembling grace.

I think of thee when the snowy swan
Glides calmly down the stream;
Its plumes the breezes scarcely fan,
Awed by their radiant gleam.

For thus I've seen the loud winds hush
To pass thy beauty by,
With soft caress and playful rush
'Mid thy bright tresses fly.

And I have seen the wild birds sail
In rings thy head above,
While thou hast stood like lily pale
Unknowing of their love.

Oh! For the day when once again
Mine eyes will gaze on thee;
But an ocean vast, a sounding main,
And ever howling sea,
Roll on between
With their billows green,
High tost tempestuously.

This song had been composed by Albion soon after his arrival at the Glass Town. The person addressed was Marina. The full rich tones of Lady Zelzia's voice did ample justice to the subject, and expressed his sense of the honor she had done him in appropriate terms.

When she had finished the company departed, for it was then rather late.

CHAPTER VI THE SPIRIT OF MARINA

As Albion pursued his way homewards alone he began insensibly to meditate on the majestic charms of Lady Zelzia Ellrington, and to compare them with the gentler ones of Marina Angus. At first he could hardly tell which to give the preference to, for though he still almost idolised Marina, yet an absence of four years had considerably deadened his remembrance of her person.

While he was thus employed he heard a soft but mournful voice whisper 'Albion!'

He turned hastily round, and saw the form of the identical Marina at a little distance distinctly visible by the moonlight.

'Marina! My dearest Marina!' he exclaimed, springing towards her, while joy unutterable filled his heart; 'how did you come here? Have the angels in Heaven brought you?'

So saying he stretched out his hand, but she eluded his grasp, and slowly gliding away, said: 'Do not forget me; I shall be happy when you return'.

Then the apparition vanished. It seemed to have appeared merely to assert her superiority over her rival, and indeed the moment Albion beheld her beauty he felt that it was peerless.

But now wonder and perplexity took possession of his mind. He could not account for this vision except by the common solution of supernatural agency, and that ancient creed his enlightened understanding had hitherto rejected until it was forced upon him by this extraordinary incident.

One thing there was, however, the interpretation of which he thought he could not mistake, and that was the repetition of her last words. 'I shall be happy when you return'. It showed that she was still alive, and that which he had seen could not be her wraith. However, he made a memorandum of the day and hour, namely, the 18th of June 815, twelve o'clock at night.

From this time the natural melancholy turn of his disposition increased, for the dread of her death before he should return was constantly before him, and the ardency of his adoration and desire to see her again redoubled.

At length, not being able any longer to bear his misery, he revealed it to his father; and the duke, touched with his grief and the fidelity of his attachment, gave him full of permission to visit England and bring back Marina with him to Africa.

CHAPTER VII ALBION'S RETURN

I need not trouble the reader with a minute detail of the circumstances of Albion's voyage, but shall pass on to what happened after he arrived in England.

It was a fair evening in September 185 when he reached Strathelleraye.

Without waiting to enter the halls of his fathers he proceeded immediately to Oakwood House. As he approached it he almost sickened when for an instant the thought that she might be no more passed his mind, but summoning hope to his aid and resting on her golden anchor he passed up the lawn and gained the glass doors of the drawing room.

As he drew near a sweet symphony of harp music swelled on his ear. His heart bounded within him at the sound. He knew that no fingers but hers could create those melodious tones with which now blended the harmony of a sweet and sad but well-known voice. He lifted the vine branch that shaded the door and beheld Marina, more beautiful he thought than ever, seated at her harp sweeping with her slender fingers the quivering chords.

Without being observed by her, as she had her face turned from him, he entered, and sitting down leaned his head on his hand and, closing his eyes, listened with feelings of overwhelming transport to the following words:

Long my anxious ear hath listened
For the step that ne'er returned;
And my tearful eye hath glistened,
And my heart hath daily burned,
But now I rest.

Nature's self seemed clothed in mourning;
Even the star-like woodland flower,
With its leaflets fair, adorning
The pathway to the forest-bower,
Drooped its head.

From the cavern of the mountain,
From the groves that crown the hill,
From the stream, and from the fountain,
Sounds prophetic murmured still,
Betokening grief.

Boding winds came fitful, sighing,
Through the tall and leafy trees;
Birds of omen, wildly crying,
Sent their calls upon the breeze
Wailing round me.

At each sound I paled and trembled,
At each step I raised my head,
Harkening if it his resembled,
Or if news that he was dead
Were come from far.

All my days were days of weeping;
Thoughts of grim despair were stirred;
Time on leaden feet seemed creeping;
Long heart-sickness, hope deferred
Cankered my heart.

Here the music and singing suddenly ceased.

Albion raised his head. All was darkness except where the silver moonbeams showed a desolate and ruined apartment instead of the elegant parlour that a few minutes before had gladdened his sight.

No trace of Marina was visible, no harp or other instrument of harmony, and the cold lunar light streamed through a void space instead of the glass door. He sprang up and called aloud: 'Marina! Marina!' But only an echo as of empty rooms answered. Almost distracted he rushed into the open air. A child was standing alone at the garden gates, who advanced towards him and said: 'I will lead you to Marina Angus; she has removed from that house to another'.

Albion followed the child till they came to a long row of tall dark trees leading to a churchyard, which they entered, and the child vanished, leaving Albion beside a white marble tombstone on which was chiselled :

MARINA ANGUS
She died
18th of June 1815
at 12 o'clock midnight

When Albion had read this he felt a pang of horrible anguish wring his heart and convulse his whole frame. With a loud groan he fell across the tomb and lay there senseless a long time, till at length he was waked from the death-like trance to behold the spirit of Marina, which stood beside him for a moment, and then murmuring, 'Albion, I am happy, for I am at peace', disappeared!

For a few days he lingered round her tomb, and then quitted Srathelleraye, where he was never again heard of.

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The reason of Marina's death I shall briefly relate. Four years after Albion's departure tidings came to the village that he was dead. The news broke Marina's faithful heart. The day after, she was no more.

C.B.

October 12th, 1830

ANGRIA AND THE ANGRIONS



Among all the descriptions I have read I do not recollect one to me more beautiful than that in the commencement of the Tales of my Landlord which describes the Burial place of the Covenanters at the Valley Head among the lonely Lowland Hills and I like it so much because there is not about it that selection of the sublime or beautiful in Nature wherewith to seize the mind independantly of power in the writer or of sentiment in his subject For excepting in the Grave stones themselves half buried it is only the picture of one among many "lone vales of green Bracken" with a rude ill cultivated country below and a brown fern Hidden brook within and dull stony swells around and a marshy monotonous Moor beyond But I born and bred upon the Hills side want no more of the great or striking to make me adore that discription for I feel enough of the Associations called up at sight of those Linnet peopled Hills and well indeed the quiet nook of Grave stones tells me of times when the perils of Life and the sternness of man fitly accorded with the Moors and Mosses of their Mountain Land I will never beleive that our minds can be so well awakened by the poetry of distant and unknown Images as by that of the things we have long been used to know I would doubt the genius of that writer who loved more to dwell upon Indian Palm Groves or Genii palaces than on the wooded manors and cloudy skies of England So when I see upon that page the reflection of objects which I have always been surrounded with I must the more delight in the description itself and in the Noble Head that framed it for it shows me both its own sacred graveyard and what I have only to lift my eyes from the pages to look on. That Mountain Ash among the stone fenced feilds that skirt the Heather and the peewits wheeling above the quiet pools that reflect only their whistling rushes and grey clouded sky. I am carried away to the lonely farm Houses on the confines of the heath whose roomy Interior shews old Tale inspiring Oaken furniture and funnel chimnies and Bibles blacken with the smoke of a century while the form of Eld cowering in its high back chair beside the fire rigid and callous with years but living dotedly on as if years had forgotten it casts by its discomfortless look as much almost of solemn awe over my scene as the Hoar Old Mortality busied above the dead does over that of the Scottish Novelist

Such a country as that I have alluded too lay round the Parish of Airdmore in Carnac, whose bleak hills sides flanked the Ash bordered brook coming down from the Gorside Dean which might be seen like a desolate chasm in the gloomy frontier bordered by fern clad slopes and lost in a wilderness of moor and nearly the farthest House toward its confines was one which stood on the highest level of the sour pale pasture Land with large black walls and mossy mistal and a plantation of gloomy firs one clump of which the oldest and the highest stretched their horizontal arms above one Gable like the Genii of that desolate scene. Beyond this House its long feild walls made a line with the November sky and the path across them led on to an interminable moor whose tracks might furnish a long days sport after Snipe or Heathcock, but no birds flew near the House except the Linnets twittering by hundreds on some wet old wall. and yet despite its loneliness this House was one of no common note in the Extensive parish and half the fireside tales of times gone by were sure to take "Darkwall" for their scene and its owners for their subject they had been Lords of the Manor of Longmoor Edge and their immemorial Grave stones had every Sunday occupied the gaze of the Congregation of Airdmore Church but more than anything contributed to their fame the apparations of the "Darkwall Gytrash" though in the awe which its appearance had spread through that parish my Readers from ignorance of its nature will in very few instances participate. A Gytrash is a Spectre neither at all similar to the Ghosts of those who once were alive nor to fairys and silvan Creatures nor to Demons and the powers of the air it does not confine its forms to the Human and indeed most seldom appears in such a form a Black Dog dragging a chain a dusky calf nay even a rolling stone or a self impelled cart wheel are more commonly the mortal coil of the Sullen Spectre But the Darkwall Gytrash was known by the form of of an Old Dwarfish and hideous Man as often seen without a head as with one and moving at dark along the naked feilds which spread round the Aged House its visits were connected in all mens minds with the fortunes of the family he hovered round and evil omens were always drawn on such occasions and if tradition spoke true fullfilled upon them

Next to their Gytrash the Thurstons themselves were the object of awe and tale telling to the parish for uncertainty creates wonder and the knowledge possessed of the Thurstons was often indistinct They had alwyls[sic] held lands and Houses far down in the fertile and populous country their family ties were all there and only at uncertain periods they were used to live upon their oldest family land William Thurston Esq^f. to whom all the property had fallen was more addicted to vice than virtue (a leaning which distinguished the Thurstons as it has done many a House besides) and from the vast distance of his usual Residence (Thurston House near Edwardston beyond Verdopolis) he was quite as little know as any of his forefathers besides he had married a Lady of good family from nobody knew where and a sight of Mrs Thurston was much more frequently wished for than obtained. Those who visited them were always from a distance and their House was not more severed from all Neighbourhood than themselves

At the Time in which my forthcoming Narrative begins Mr Thurston had for some time been absent at the metropolis but his return was expected that day which was the one before a great cattle fair annually held in Airdmore as the centre of a vast pastoral and Grazing district and which this year was expected to be larger and more numerously attended than ever for through the whole season it had been rumoured that Mr PERCY. the celebrated cattle dealer would attend and a day before the fair the van of his Horned Legions came in under the care of his co partners Mess^{rs} O' Connor Cary and Gordon who with Mr H M M Montmorency the well known Barrister rode up in the Evening to Darkwall to meet Mr Percy their principal who with Mr Thurston was expected to arrive there that night from the Capital The Worthies were gathered round the Drawing Room fire and through closed doors and passages their Oaths and laughter might be heard in the Large Old Kitchen where Mrs Maria Thurston was superintending the preparations for a kingly supper.

That Kitchen in the decline of November Daylight seemed Ruddied all over by the glow of the Roaring fire that flashed all its radiance upon the mighty Dresser of Ancient and Burnished pewter In so much that far opposite from the else darkened end of the Room that front of polished metal reflected in every plate and dish a bright and bickering blaze The Dark Oak Settles them selves

glistered and the faces of the Neat Aproned Servant Maids shone brighter than either while they bent to their duties over the Hissing Roast and fragrant steaming Ovens Hardly at any bidding would the great Spaniels quit such a Elysian Hearth and when they were forced to leave it for the darkening passage the change so pressed upon their hearts that pricking both ears at the social roar from the Drawing Room they barked till all the House rung Hollow with the Echoe. But in the great kitchen what most chiefly struck the Eye was the Tall and Ladylike Woman with black silk Apron and Round white Arms bared to the Elbow whose pink and Taper fingers were busied in arranging and superintending what her Active maids did their part to create. Her white stockinged and black sandalped] feet moved the very picture of quiet Elegance and now and then her white Eyelids drooped over the table would lift their dark lashes to the window with an expectant look though to see the shadening prospect she had often to put back the raven curls that would when downward bending escape from their Lacy confinement After such a parade of description my Readers may wonder to find Mrs Thurston engaged in occupations so little allied to those of a Lady but she was though polished and educated enough accustomed to a retired and rural Country where mistresses are really Ladies of the House Thousands a year in among the Carnac Mountains did not in those days deter a wife from seeing the thousands well expended Nor had French Cooks found their way to Airdmore so the task of pleasing visitors fell naturally to the person whose interest it was to please

The grand hour of projection was passed the safty of the viands was assured and releived from her Anxiety Mrs Thurston looked at the clock which spoke a hour long after that affixed for Mr Thurstons arrival. It was rather inconvenient she thought to leave the Gentlemen so long without their host but it was time at any rate for her to dress so she called her waiting maid and left the kitchen leaving the Girls gathering round the fire as neat as trim Ribbons and white Aprons could make them the excitement of expectation awoke in their faces and multitudinous guess arose on their tongues all about the famous Cattle Dealer whose exploits in the feilds of Mars and Venus had long been the fireside talk of Africa He and his partners known though they were "Wide as the world" were novelties in the body to Airdmore and the distant villiage was as mad awaiting to see them as was the fireside knot of the Darkwall kitchen

"What Horses they have" said one "Johns been a cleaning on 'em and he says he never saw such tits sin he was born

"Yes and" said a second "What a man that young'st on 'em is — " "What the great Lawyer — "? — "Nay him with the Red Head lass — if he didnt take me round the waist as I was coming through the passage — the impudence — "

"Eh lass! I wadnt ha' said it nother but how foul that Black whiskered one looks — whisht thats the bell — who'll go? The call about 'em like any Alehouse — "

Straight rose a fuss each one wanting to go and to seem as if she would not go but the footman just entering saved them the trouble and they began to discourse about "How the Red haired Gentleman was O' Connor the Brother of the Lady that Percy had run away with and How Mr Montmorency was her Husband and all about the story and the News that John had brought from Girington far away in the East about Miss Hartford and Mr Percy and — but in the high tide of story telling a clatter of Horses Hoofs came down the yard and a Gentlemans voice was heard giving an order outside the door which the footman opened directly thinking it was His Master but Mr Thurston was not there And the visitor a much taller person was in the act of throwing the reins of his Noble Grey to a servant mounted upon a "Great White Horse" who taking both his beasts toward the stable left Mr Percy bowing his lofty head to enter beneath the kitchen porch to the utter confusion of the servants when instead of their Master they saw enter a man of such uncommon height attired in short Green frock white cord Breeks and Top boots with a white broad brim on his head and immense Orange whiskers on his face

"Now my Girls" he said "let me see your Lady as soon as you can" and therewith he strode to the fire standing with his back toward it on the Hearth and placing his hat on a table The servants crowded together gigglingly to note the celebrated man and he looked a noble fellow enough with his superb white forehead and head of Auburn curls and cheeks so richly haloed though their marked lines of dissipation and the athwart glance of his eyes took somewhat from the gazers admiration and left a sensation akin to fear. She who had done his bidding returned to usher him into a parlour but he swore he was not so loath to leave them and began a verbal salute that made them hardly know where to look for smiling till the door opening hushed Him and Mrs Thurston Entered who now dressed with wreathing curls and snowwhite neck and shoulders looked as handsome as she before had looked Ladylike Each warmly advancing shook hands

And "By God" he said "I could not have thought to see my little Maria so much improved by time. It spoils all that I know but it has mended thee —

"It is long since we met Sir" she answered "I was only a Girl then — but where is my Husband? Have you not brought him with you?"

While speaking Mrs Thurston led Mr Percy to a sitting room and he swore her Husband did not need his assistance he was fending for himself and he guessed the D — I had him in some plot or another They parted at Denard and she must expect him home in a day or two. But he would not talk on the subject and declared that when he knew it was years since they two had met the thought bewildered almost past talking He durst say she had long forgotten him but through all the rough work it been his lot to encounter He had found a minute now and then to think upon her "Ah" she replied "I was fourteen then which was an age old enough to observe and the happiness I saw you enjoying when I was at Percy Hall has recurred to my mind ever since when I have heard of the sorrows and dangers which after years have connected with your name — but you look greived that I should mention it will you join your freinds Sir or — "

"Freinds Maria! D — n them how many are there? Mont I should judge from that laugh and the crack brained O' Connor? first let me dress and then have at them — the drunken Blackguards!" So Mrs Thurston ringing the footman appeared whom she bidd call Mr Percys servant and as the man came in she went out leaving a striking contrast in appearance to fill up her place in the room He was an aged and stunted fellow with a forehead moulded in to every demon feeling and his grey hairs and black Old fashioned cloaths mocked in every motion the alert twinkle of his deep grey eye Such was the celebrated Robert King or as all the world called him *Mr S death* an old villain whose crimes would fill the Newgate Calendar and whilolm the mentor of his almost equally accomplished Master whom now he served both as personal servant and as the cheif Agent in his extensive Horse trade an office which the old Theifs Yorkshire birth and Horse Jockey education perfectly qualified him to fill. He ushered Mr Percy up stairs candle in hand and when in a

while they came down conducted him into the drawing Room where round a blazing fire sat the circle of partnership waiting for the advent of their staid head. All jumped up as he appeared and being told that Mrs Thurston waited supper for them followed their Guide to the Dining Room O Connor swearing internal oaths of enjoyment at the long display of shining plate and snowwhite[sic] table and Montmorency giving Percy a fiendly squint as he saw the beautiful woman who stood to welcome their entrance.

She, when all were seated, with her somewhat pale though smiling face and large dark eyes and elegant womanly form to a painter's eye made a beautiful companion to the lofty stature and August forehead of the Handsome though Dissipated looking man at her right hand and as good a contrast to the Black and sullen ferocity of the malignant Gordon on her left. The wild disjunct profligate O' Connor rattled and the facetious though far deeper dyed scoundrel Montmorency joked away opposite, but in such wise that as soon as possible Mrs Thurston quitted the table and left them to the paradise of Bottles and glasses that O Connors heart had all day been panting for.

"Now" he cried drawing in to the fire "lets unite Theory and practice they've been a cursed while separate with me fill round to our Hostess and may our own homes never want as fair an Ornament I mean when we have a Home G — d D — n!"

"Now my Hearts" said the Barrister "whats the use bothering ourselves with care and we have only a grain of sense in our heads here's we four here been sitting all the Evening doing nothing but cracking a lot over the old foolishness and theres you Percy have only entered a quarter since and your Bread's baked already D — n the jade fortune — pass the Bottle Arthur"

Arthur did so with another oath that yet more relieved him and his wild Red head commenced its customary whirl of thoughtless oddity which Hector Matthias Montmorency took a delight in bothering to a truly Irish confusion of ideas all the while as he did it keeping a keen grey twinkle upon the motions of his Leader Alexander Percy "Come now my chuck" cried Hector coaxingly to O Connor "I want to have thy opinion at full on the subject we left before supper —"

"Shiver my breeches if I aut forgotten it Mont —"

"The identity of moral right and wrong my chuck you had just set about prosing —"

"Oh by G — d I recollect — well and you see when a man says if I commit this crime I'm sure of getting a fairing for it either here or hereafter what's that? Why its cowardice real D — d infernal poltroonery he's afraid and he makes fear the mainspring of his refusal Damm when I was aboard the Rover if I haddnt whipped my whittle into Grayson it would have been through fear of a licking. I did strike in and whats the issue — why I'd a thousand pounds that made half a years paradise after it! God — why theres Percy now. Whats his theory? — Ive had cause for handling him many a day — and so have you Mont By G — d — well what would have been the issue if I had?"

When I was aboard the Rover — (excuse me madam Mr Percy knows what I mean) — I used at first to be for ever asking myself — Is this right? if not what'll be the issue? — Well Day came on after Day — never an hour but I had to do something wrong and never a night but I turned in as drunk as paradise — well I thought whats the theory of this? I see its practice and thats a regular elysium I looked we should all strike and founder some fine morning but it was useless nought happened and our purses became like the Widow's cruise. we had always our hand in them and they weighed never an ounce the lighter — Excuse me madam what could we do? Temptations came and goodly merchant men crossed on all sides of us What was the issue, why what was theirs became Ours — There was the fight of — well well we'll not mention names but however it was the first time I shed blood, you'll forgive me?. well I never slept a wink the night after for counting over the good that I got by it where was the punishment there?. Oh the

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That strange union which formed Percy's character of Debauched profligacy and impassioned feeling and restless Ambition and which then was but beginning to be over clouded by his after embittered melancholy but always excited the interest in Mrs Thurston's mind which it had done in the minds of many thousands besides and the story of his life its ceaseless wanderings and rumoured crimes only added to that interest and kept awake the Romance which his present employment might have tended to destroy She had expected with much excitement the visit of so celebrated a man and when arrived each word and action seemed to fill up her fancys sketch or open features in the prospect unknown before.

Mr Percy though she had not seen him had been a comrade of her Husbands in the Metropolis and Mr Thurston had now invited him to stay at his Residence whither he should follow him so soon as his business at Fidenia should be despatched and it was left till such time for his Lady to entertain him which at first she fancied herself quite unable to do but she little knew him — While his Gang was present He had appeared sour and Impetuous but they were now gone And while his Hostess occupied a Sopha by the fire He arose on a sudden and commenced a progress backward and forward through the room His Majestic figure now lightened now shadowed as he advanced to or receded from the fire and his blue wayward eyes enkindled and his expression each moment changing while he poured forth on many a subject his words so warmly and flowingly eloquent. If Mrs Thurston talked to him he would stop and listen with a keenness which almost fluttered and damped her but in turn when he talked she felt roused beyond the pitch of every day conversation She had no need to tempt him forwards for something had excited him with evident pleasure and it was far more the pretty swan like neck and Raven Ringlets of his Hostess that encouraged him than any regard for subject or any desire to shine.

"I wonder" she said for she had heard of the morbid bitterness of his feelings "I wonder Sir after what I know to find you now so cheerful. It was much my fear that this wild moorland and ancient House would oppress you with lassitude and ennuye

"And there are times" he replied "when it might if I were left in it alone but not with you here and indeed I have too often held communion with loneliness to find it either strange or disagreeable when I think of long nights at sea and days of the winters in Norway I am minded that but for the burial which they gave to other greifs I should have been withered into my grave before now. But I can always think best when I am far away at sea and I can feel best when I am even as I am now. you must forgive my intrusion on your time Mrs Thurston because it is seldom I can obtain such an opportunity of pleasure and if you knew how I shall feel when I leave you you would hold me very excusable in keeping you so long

Have not you been used to think of me as a debauched profligate — and one to whom God had denied every spark of kindly nature? — and I own that vice and I have held a long companionship.

FIRST VOLUME OF TALES OF THE ISLANDERS JUNE 31 1829

Tales of Islanders

The play of the Islanders was formed in December 1827 in the following manner. One night about the time when the cold sleet and dreary fogs of November are succeeded by the snow storms & high peircing nightwinds of confirmed winter we where all sitting round the warm blazing kitchen fire having just concluded a quarrel with Taby concerning the propriety of lighting a candle from which she came of victorious no candle having been produced . a long pause succeeded which was at last broken by Branwell saying in a lazy maner " I don't know what to do." this was reechoed by Emily and Anne T wha ya may go t'bed'

B I'd rather do anything than that & C your so glum tonight C well supose we had each an Island B if we had I would choose the Island of Man C & I would choose Isle of Wight E the Isle of Arran for me'

A & mine should be Guernsey C the D of Wellington should be my cheif man B Herries should be mine E Walter Scott should be mine A I should have Bentinck here our conversation was interrupted by the to us dismal sound of the clock striking 7 & we where summoned of to bed. the next day we added several others to our list of names till we had got almost all the cheif men in the kingdom.

after this for a long time nothing worth noticing ocured. In June 1828 we erected a school on a fictitious Island which was to contain 1000 children. the maner of the building was as followsf: the Island was 50 miles in circumference & certainly it apeared more like the region of enchantment or a beautiful fiction than sober reality. in some parts made terribly sublime by mighty rocks rushing streams and roaring cataracts with here and there an oak either scathed by lightning or withered by time & as if to remind the lonely passenger of what it once was a green young scion twisting round its old grey trunk. in other parts of the Island there were greensward's glittering fountains springing in the flowery meadows or among the pleasant woods where fairys were said to dwell its borders embroidered by the purple violet & the yellow primrose and the air perfumed by the sweet wild flowers and ringing with the sound of the cuckoo & turtle dove or the merry music of the blackbird & thrush formed the beautiful scenery.

One specialty? around the palace school was a fine large park in which the beautiful undulations of hill & plain variegated the sceen- ery which might otherwise have been monotonous shady Groves crowened the hills pure streams wandered through the plains watering? the banks with a lovelier verdure as4 clear lakes whose borders are overhung by the drooping willow the elegant larch the venerable oak & the evergreen laurel seemed the crystal emerald framed mirrors of some huge Giant. often at times it is said of one of the most beautiful of these lakes that when all is quiet the music of fairyland may be heard and a tiny barge of red sandalwood its mast of amber its sails & cordage of silk and its oars of fine ivory may be seen skimming across the lake & when its small crew have gathered the water lily plant back again & landing on the flowery bank spread their transparent wings & melt away at the sound of mortal footsteps like the mists of the morning before the splendour of the sun.

from a beautiful grove of winter roses & twining woodbine towers a magnificent palace of pure white marble whose elegant & finely wrought pillars & majestic turrets seem the work of mighty Geni & not of feeble men. ascending a flight of marble steps you come to a grand entrance which leads into a Hall surrounded by Corinthian pillars of white marblef. in the midst of the hall is a colossal statue holding in each hand a vase of crystal from which rushes a stream of clear water and breaking into a thousand diamonds & pearls falls into a basin of pure Gold & disapearing through an opening rises again in different parts of the park in the form of brilliant fountains these falling part into numerous rills which winding through the ground throw themselves into a river which runs into the sea.

at the uper end of the hall was a grove of orange trees bearing the golden fruit & fragrant blossoms often upon the same branch, from this hall you pass into another splendid & spacious apartment all hung with rich deep crimson velvet & from the grand dome is suspended a magnificent lustre of fine gold the drops of which are pure crystal, the whole length of the room run long sofa's covered also with Crimson velvet, at each end are chimney peices of dove coulour Italian marble the pillars of which are of the Corinthian order fluted and wreathed with goldf. from this we pass into a smaller but very elegant room the sofas of which are covered with light blue velvet flowerd with silver and surrounded with small white marble columns.

& now from fine halls splendid drawing rooms I must begin to describe scenes of a very different nature, in the Hall of the fountain behind a statue is a small door over which is drawn a curtain of white silk. this door when opened discover's a small apartment at the father end of which is a very large iron door which leads to a long dark passage at the the end of which is a flight of steps leading to a subterranean dungeon which I shall now endeavour to describe.

it has the appearance of a wide vault dimly lighted by a lamp asphaltas which casts a strange death like lustre over part of the dungeon & leaves the rest in the gloom & darkness of midnight. in the middle is a slab of black marble supported by 4 pillars of the same. at the head of it stands a throne of iron. in several parts of the vault are instrument's of torture for this place is the dreadful hall where wicked cockneys are judged by that most unjust of Judges, CN and his gang S. TOD & the rest.? at the end of this dungeon is the entrance to the cell's which are apropiated to the private & particular use of Hal B. Stunt the Cockney's & the naughty school childrenf. these cells are dark, vaulted arched and so far down in the earth that the loudest shreik could not be heard by any inhabitant of the upper world & in these as well as the dungeon the most unjust torturing might go on without any fear of detection if it was not that I keep the key of the dungeon & Emily keeps the key of the cell's6 & the huge strong iron entrances will brave any assault except with the lawful instrument's.

the children which inhabit this magnificent palace are composed only of the young nobles of the land except such asJohnny Lockhart. the cheif Governor under us is the Duke of Wellington. this however is only a honorary distinction as when applied to his Grace returned the following answer.

"Little King and Queens Qthese are our titles)7 I am sorry to say my avocation's of Soldier & Statesman will not allow me to

comply with your requests that I would be Governor of some ioodreds, not to say any looods of Children unless the title be merely honorary & I am to have a few scores of subordinates under me. with the request that it may be I remain your obedient subject, W.” the request was complied with.

the Guards for keeping the children in order & taking them out to walk are the Marquis of Douro & Lord Charles Wfellesley for which they are peculiarly fitted as they lead them into the wildest & most dangerous parts of the country leaping rocks precepeces chasms &c & little caring whether the children go before or stop behind & finally coming home with about a dozen wanting who are found a few days after in hedges or ditches with legs or head broken & affording a fine field for Sir A Hume Sir A Cooper & Sir H Halford to display their different modes of setting and trepanning.”

The Gfuards for threshing the Children when they do wrong and sometimes they exercise the priveledge when they do not need it are Colonel O’Shaugnesy and his Nephew Foghartyf. these are often eminently useful. I forgot to mention that Branwell has a large black club with which he thump’s the children upon ocasion and that most unmercifully. I have now done my notices of the school children for the present.

among our Islanders there are Baines’s 3 sons T E & T who go by the seperate name’s of toltol, Nedned or sometimes rr Raten & Tomtomf. these 3 are the most mischevous trio in existencef: t is about 2 foot long n is half the length of his brother & t is 3 quaters as long as ned. tol is dressed in a lawyers gown & a huge wig which reaches to his feet & wraps round him; rat is atired in a coarse peice of sackcloth tied round the neck and feet with rope & having the appearance of a tail & ears & Tom is dressed in the dress of a reporter.

about a year ago as we where wandering in one of the woods which belong to the great Domain of Strathfeildsay we heard a low voice behind us saying “there has been a storm today & the now blue & radiant arch of the mighty firmament has been overcast with dark cloud’s the gloom of which was only broken by feirce gleams of lightning which shot across the black vapours like the word of revenge through the clouds hatred which obscured the bright dawn of Whigish intellect! & I was appointed to be their avenger! yes this arm (here we saw an arm of little more than an inch long dart through the foliage) this arm shall wreak their spite upon the head of that stern Duke in whose domains I am. but soon I shall bring his pride down to the dust & make him bow to the soveriegn people “ then with a rush through the tangled grass (for the spiteful creature did not reach higher than the grass) it reached the park gate but here a great obstacle presented itself for the keeper of the gate is an old veteran who has followed the Duke through all his wars & attended him in all his Battle’s & if he had seen the animal he would certainly have taken it for a rat & would have treated it accordingly, ned turned round & seeing us he said “Little Queens will you open that gate?” as we wished to see the end of this adventure we took raten up and threw him over the High wall & then knocked at the gate. we presently heard a rustling among the tree’s and the soldier stood before us. LQjf you please orderly man will you open that gate for us OM I must first know who you are LQJ We’re Lfittle Queens OM 0 you are you? come then so saying he opened the gate & we entredf. Rfaten ran swiftly up the park & narrowly escaped been trod to Death by a deer which bounded close past him. there was however one thing which threatened to stop his progress & that was a river that gently & silently was winding it’s way through the park. for a while he stood still on its banks & looked around & behind him was the large wood he had just quitted. it was situated on a high hill & covered to the top with dark green foliage interspersed here & there with the lightly waveing Branches of the purple Beach or the pale green of the white poplar. on each side of him lay the extensive & beautiful park bounded by the wide domains of the Great Duke before him was the splendid mansion of Strathfieldsay & close to his feet was the river on the opposite banks of which stood a deer stooping it’s head & branching antlers to drink of the pure waters which flowed before it. on the branches of a young oak which grew close by the stream sat a nightingale which was begin- ing it’s early song to the silver moon that now appeared like a pale crescent in the clear sky of the east, over all the setting sun shed a golden radiance which invested every thing with a splendour that made it appear like burning gold - for a while raten seemed moved by the beauty of the scene but sudenly exclaiming “rr no weaknessf he leaped into the river & swimming across he gained the opposite Bank then runing with inconceivable swiftness up the rest of the park he reached the house ran through the hall the gallery the stairs & at last reached the Duke’s library . nobody was there & upon the table stood a tumbler of water; into this Raton put something which however did not change it’s coulour then leaping from the table he hid himself behind a large Book which lay on the carpet.

just then the sound of footsteps was heard in the gallery the door opened & a tall man with the air & carriage of a soldier entred followed by another who was likewise tall but very stout. the first was his grace the Duke of Wellington & the 2 was Sir Alexander Hume, as soon as they entred the duke took from a shelf a volume & sitting down the following conversation ensued .

D Hume what do you think of Wfalter Scott’s history of Nfapoleon?”

H do you mean me to take the fact of it being written by a pekin’0 into consideration my lord? D yes H then I think it is written as well as a pekin is capable of writing D do you think it has any truth in it?

H a great deal my Lord D you have given it a high meed of praise H do you think I have praised it too highly?

D Oh no H I would never wish to praise a pekin too much after this a silence of about half an hour ensued & still the Duke did not touch the water. raten began to be impatient & to fear for the success of his enterprize. at last his Grace took up the glass & drained it’s contents. Rfaten was on the point of giving a shriek through joy but restrained himself . just then Hume said UI never thought much good came of drinking cold waterf & a few minutes after he exclaimed “my Lord are you well? how pale how very pale you are I never saw anybody more so”

here raten shouted out “And pale he will always be.” the Duke fixed his stern eye on him & the creature shrank shuddering back to his corner “my Lord are you dyingf? ring the bell Lfittle QJueens “

his Grace’s features collapsed with agony the volume fell from his hand and he sank back in his chair. just then a loud yell rang in our ears a rushing noise was heard & a Giant of Cloud’s stood before us. he touched the Duke & new life seemed to be given him. he stood up & in a firm tone demandfd the name of the Giant. it answered with a voice of thunder “mystery” & then slowly vanished.”

his Grace then ordered every one out of his prescence & a few days after raten was found in his father’s house at Lfeeds pale with horror trembling & half dead but how he got there is uncertaintf. nor could he ever be induced to give any explanation & truly a mystry doth the whole affair remain to this day.

Prince Lfeopold & Sir George Hill have always entertained a great dislike to the Marquis of Douro & Lord Charles Wfellesley . Prince Lfeopold it is well known is a very mean sort of personage with an appearance of cunning about him that is very disagreeable.

Sir George Hill is frank and brave somewhat given to gambling & an undue dislike of pekings. it has been lately surmised that he only pretends to dislike Arthur & Charles Wellesley for a little amusement & this is most likely true.

A little while ago as Emily & me one stormy night were going through the wood which leads to school we saw by the light of the moon which just then broke through a cloud the flashing of some bright substance, the moon then became obscured & we could discern nothing more but see very black cloud. we heard a well known voice saying "O Arthur I wish we had never come! what will my father say if he ever gets to know of it? & I am beginning to get very cold for it rains fast and the wind is high "wrap your fur cloak closer round you Charles & let us lean against this old tree for I shall not be able to stand much longer without some support. the sky is quite covered with dark clouds & how dismal the wind is moaning among the trees." "Arthur what was that noise I heard? listen "it is a raven Charles I am not much given to superstition but I remember hearing my grandmother say it is a sign that something bad is coming to pass. "if we were to die here tonight & remember Arthur we came here by appointment of two of our worst enemies what would my mother do & my father - " here they both sobbed aloud & we likewise heard a strange & horrible noise sweep through the wood. "what is the matter with our dogs Arthur? are they dying?"

"no Charles but that likewise is said to be a sound of death " "a sound of death Arthur! but listen again to the raven O! this is a dreadful place."

"Hush Charles! they are coming."

the glimmering of a lantern appeared through the trees and two men burst upon the path. one of them was tall & bony but he had an expression of pity in his face as he said "poor fellows! Though I don't particularly like you yet I'm sorry you've had to wait so long in the rain this cold night - " the other was a mean despicable wretch & he squinted . "prince Leopold & Sir George I — I ill we are quite ready to follow you but go slowly for we cannot possibly walk fast" "come along then. "so saying they set off & we followed close behind . by the light of the lantern we could see that the Marquis of Douro & Lord Charles Wellesley had 2 bloodhounds with them & as soon as they emerged from the forest these 2 dogs gave a dreadful yell . Prince Leopold shook with terror & Charles patted them at which they moaned piteously. after this they were silent for awhile & the march proceeded. after climbing a great many high steep rocks & leaping many ditches we entered on the confines of the great moor. just then the bloodhound's stopped again & gave another horrible cry which rang all over the wide heath & seemed to be answered from a great distance with a deeper & more dreadful yell.

"do make your nasty dogs hold their tongues or else I will" said Sir George "if you touch them Hill you must take the consequences" answered Arthur "they might bite you"

Leopold was panting with fear.

"come on boys " shouted Sir George with a peal of hollow laughter which was answered by the echoing rocks with tenfold vehemence. just at that moment a dull flapping of wings & an ominous croak was heard .

"what in the name of wonder is that?"

"it's a raven" replied Leopold almost fainting with cowardice. "O! do make haste that we may reach some shelter for the darkness of the night is increasing the rain is falling faster & the wind sweeps with more fearful blast over this wild bleak moor they all moved on & after a while a light became visible on the verge of the horizon which as they approached it vanished but by the help of the lantern we could discern a small & seemingly deserted cottage. they entered it & we followed by a door which was decayed by time & shattered by violence in many places.

"& is this where you intend to take us?" exclaimed the Marquis of Douro.

"Oh no but as you seem unable to go any farther I thought you had better stop here & very likely we shall find some of our friends below said Sir George as he opened a door which discovered a narrow flight of steps down which they went & then came to another door & now likewise they heard a sound of many voices & much mirth . Sir George opened the door & immediately a blaze of light & genial warmth burst forth which almost overpowered them after being so long exposed to the dark wet night. the cellar into which they came was vaulted & the lime dropping of the wall in many parts, there was a large peat fire blazing on the hearth & on benches round sat a great many officers among whom was the Marquis of A Lords CAW & G P. some where drinking some playing at cards singing & yet. as soon as the marquis of Douro & Lord Charles Wellesley saw these things they exclaimed "we will go no farther & though we die for it we had rather stop all night on the open moor than in this wicked place & if you prevent us from going hence it will be at your peril."

"will it?" said Leopold with a shrill scornful laugh.

they called their dogs which however did not make their appearance. Leopold then rushed towards them threw them down & gaged them & tied their hands & feet then returning to the party round the fire he began to play sing and be as loud & talkative as any among them, but in the midst of all this mirth & cheerfulness the sound of footsteps was heard descending the stairs the door was burst open & 2 men followed by 3 large dogs burst into the apartment. one of the men was instantly known by his stern countenance & flashing eye as he exclaimed with fierce energy "you wretches where are my sons?" it was the. DUKE OF WELLINGTON, they were too much astounded to reply till he repeated the question more fiercely than before & commanded them to give him an answer. Leopold replied tremblingly "they are there."

"they are! you vile beggar" said his Grace & kicked him to the opposite end of the cellar then going to the corner which Leopold had pointed to he unbound & ungaged his sons & raised them up. they were however unable to stand & fell back again. his Grace then turned to the rest & said in a tone of voice which showed he meant to be obeyed, "I command you all to quit this place & if ever you return here again I shall make you suffer for it & that dreadfully."

immediately they flung open the door rushed up the stair & scampered off as fast as they could. In the meantime the other man who was Doctor Hume had given Arthur & Charles something which strengthened them so much that they could stand & even walk. the Duke then inquired how they came to that house, just at this moment we issued from our hiding place & related all the circumstances after which we asked how his Grace got to know of Charles & Arthur being there. His Grace told us that as he was on his way to school accompanied by Hume & his great Bloodhound he thought he heard at a distance the yelling of his sons dogs which was immediately answered by his own and that after he had gone about a mile farther he met a countryman who told him that he had seen his sons on the Great moor in the company of George Hill & Prince Leopold that then though it was night he rode towards the moor but

was met on his way by his sons dogs who led them to the cottage.

as soon as his Grace had finished he rose to depart & Arthur &

Charles followed. when they had got up the dark narrow stairs and to the door of the cottage they were surprised to find the rising sun beaming through the chinks of the door & when they reached the open air the scenes which greeted their eyes were truly refreshing. instead of dark watery clouds there was the blue radiant dome like sky in which the pale moon was yet visible. the glorious sun was rising in the east & making the rain which had fallen the preceding night and which still remained on the balmy heath to sparkle like fine diamond's. a few little wild mountain sheep were to be seen & as they drew near they scurried away & sprang up the rocks till they could view us safely at a distance^ the lark sprang from his mossy bed at our approach and began to warble its matin song & the higher it mounted up in the blue heavens the sweeter did its song become till it could no longer be heard, in a short time they came to the edge of the moor & reached School about 9 o'clock all sound in life & limb. thus ended the Duke's Marquis's & Lord's adventure of the cottage

Charlotte Bronte June the 31 - 1829

SECOND VOLUME OF TALES OF THE ISLANDERS

CHAPTER ONE

I have before put forth a volume of these tales in which the subject of the school was mentioned, in that volume I laid down the rule's by which the school was governed & like wise the names of the gov- erner's with their several character's &c. I shall now proceed with this subject.

for some time after it was established the institution went on very well. all the rules were observed with scrupolous exactness, the gov- erner's attended admirably to their duty the children where absolutely becoming something like civilized being's, to all outward appearance at least, gambling was less frequent among them, their quarrels with each other were less savage & some little attention was paid by them- selve's to order & cleanliness, at this time we constantly resided in the magnificent palace of the school as did all the governors so that nothing was left entirely to the care of servants & underlings. The great room had become the resort of all the great ministers in their hours of leisure (that is in the evenings) and they seeing how well were conducted resolved to uphold the institution with all their might.

this prosperous state of affairs continued for about six months & then Parliament was opened & the Great Catholic question' was brought forward & the Dukes measures were disclosed and all was slander violence party spirit & confusion. O those 3 months from the time of the kings speech to the end! nobody could think speak or write on anything but the catholic question and the Duke of Wellington or Mr Peel. I remember the day when the Intelligence Extraordinary came with Mr Peels speech in it containing the terms on which the catholics were to be let in; with what eagerness papa tore off the cover & how we all gathered round him & with what breathless anxiety we listend as one by one they were disclosed & explained & argued upon so ably & so well & then when it was all out how aunt said she thought it was excellent & that the catholics could do no harm with such good security. I remember also the doubts as to wether it would pass into the house of Lords & the prophecys that it would not. when the paper came which was to decide the question the anxiety was almost dreadful with which we listened to the whole affair - the opening of the doors the hush the Royal Dukes in there robes & the Great Duke in green sash & waistcoat the rising of all the peeresses when he rose the reading of his speech papa saying that his words were like precious gold & lastly the majority one to 4 in favour of the bill, but this is a digression & I must beg my reader's to excuse it — to proceed with my subject then.

in consequence of this catholic question the Duke & Mr Peel where of course obliged to be constantly in London & we soon took ourselves off to the same place. OShaugnesy & his nephew were away shooting somewhere & the whole management of the school was left to the Marquis of Dfouro and lord Charles Wfellesley. The upshot will be seen in the next chapter

CHAPTER TWO

For some time we heard not a word about the school & never took the trouble to inquire until at length one morning as we were sitting at breakfast in came a letter the which when we had opened we perceived was from my lord Wellesley. the purport was as follows June 8. Vision Island Little King & queen's I write this letter to inform you of a rebellion which, has broken out in the school the particulars of which I have not time to relate: all I can say is that I am at present in a little hut built in the open air - and - but they are coming & I can say no more —

I remain yours &c - Charles W

PS since I wrote the above we have had a battle in which our bloodhounds fought bravely & we have conquered — we are however reduced to a great extremity for want of food & if you dont make haste & come to our help we must surrenderf. bring my father's great blood-hound with you & doctor Hume & the gamekeeper likewise

as soon as we had read this letter we ordered a balloon⁴ the which when it was brought we got into & then steered our way through the air towards Strathfieldsayf. when we had there arrived we took up blood & hounds & the gamekeeper & then went quick-way to the Island. we alighted in the grounds about the School and on casting our eyes toward's the myrtle grove we saw the stately palace rising in it's magnificence from the green trees which grew thickly around & towering in silent grandeur over that Isle which was rightly named a dream for never but in the visions of the night has the eye of man beheld such gorgeous beauty such wild magnificence as is in this fairy land and never but in the imaginings of his heart has his ear heard such musick as that which proceeds from the giant's harp hid from sight amid those treesf. listen there is a faint sound like the voice of a dying swan but now a stronger breeze sweeps through the strings & the music is rising. hark how it swellsf! what grandeur was in that wild note but the wind roars louder. I heard the muttering of distant thunder it is drawing nearer & nearer & the tunes of the harp & swelling till all at once amidst the roaring of thunder & the howling of the wind it peals out with such awful wildness such unearthly grandeur that you are tempted to believe it is the voice of spirits speaking. This is the storm.

but to proceed with my subject: after we had been in the Island about half an hour we saw lord Wellesley approaching at a distance^ when he came near he acosted us with "well little Queen's I am glad you are come make haste & follow me for there is not a moment to be lost." as we went along he at our request gave us the following narrative as to the origin of the school rebellion.

"for about 3 day's after you were gone things went on very well but, at the end of that time symptom's of insubordination began to manifest themselvesf. these we strove to check but in vain & instead of growing better they grew worse . the school now was divided into 4 parties each of whom was headed by a cheiftein namely Pfrince Polignac Prince George & Johny Lockhart & the Princess Vittoria.⁵ these 4 were constantly quarreling & fighting with each other in a most outrageous maner & after struggling a few weeks with them to no purpose they all ran off & are now encamped in a very wild part of the Island which we shall presently come to. they are well provided with 2 cannons each party & a quantity of powder & shot. sometime's they all unite against us & then we have a bad chance I assure you but now you are come to our assistance we shall soon do for them.f as soon as he had ended we emerged from the forest in which we had till then been travelling & entred a deep glen through which rushed an impetuous brawling river roaring & foaming amongst the large stone's which impeded its course & then as it's chanel deepened & widened it became calm & smooth flowing silently through the wide green plain on the right hand fertilizing & refreshing it as it went. on our left arose rocks frowning darkly over the glen & black- ning it with their mighty shadowf. in some parts they were covered with tall pine tree's through which the wind moaned sadly as it swept among their scathed branchesf. in other parts imense fragments of rock looked out from their shaggy coving & hung their grey summits awfully over the vale. no sound but the echo of a distant cannon which was discharge d as we entred the glen & the scream of the eagle startled from her aerie disturbed the death like silence.

in a short time we came to the place where the children were encampdf. the tents of the Vitorans were pitched on the summit of a rock those of the Polignacs in a deep ravine & the Georgians had taken up their abode in an open spot of ground & the Lockhartians had entrenched them selves among some trees. the hut of the Marquis of Douro & Lord Wellesley was built beneath the shade of a spreading oak. a tremendous rock rose above it. on one side was a gently swelling hill on the other a grove of tall trees & before it ran a clear rippling streamf.

when we had entred the humble abode we beheld the Marquis of Dfourou lying on a bed of leaves. his face was very pale; his fine feature's seemed as fixed as a marble statuef. his eyes were closed & his glossy curling hair was in some parts stiffened with blood, as soon as we beheld this sight Charles rushed forward & falling on the bed beside his brother he fainted away, the usual remedies were then applied to him by doctor Hume & after a long time he recovered. all this while Arthur had neither spoke nor stirred & we thought he was dead. the game-keeper was raving & even the hardihearted Hume shed some tears & Charles seemed like one demented. in this emergency we thought it advisable to send quick-way for the Duke of Wellington. this we accordingly did & as soon as we saw him coming one of us went out to meet him. when we had informed him of what had happened he became as pale as death; his lip's quivered & his whole frame shook with agitation . in a short time he arrived at the hut & then going up to the bedside he took hold of one lifeless hand & said in a tremulous & scarcely audible voice "Arthur my son speak to me". just then at the sound of his father's words Arthur slowly opened his eye's & looked up. when he saw the Duke he tried to speak but could not. we then in the plenitude of our goodness & kindness of heart, cured him instantaneously by the application of some fairy remedie's & as soon as we had done so the Duke drew from his finger a diamond ring & presented it to us. this we accepted & thanked him for it. After these transactions we informed his Grace of the school rebellion . he immediately went out without speaking a word & we followed him. he proceeded up to the place where they were encamped & called out in a loud tone of voice that if they did not surrender they were all dead men as he had brought several thousand blood hound's with him who would tear them to peice's in a moment. this they dreaded more than anything & therefore agreed to surrender which they did immediately & for a short time thereafter the school prospered as before but we becoming tired of it sent the children of to their own home's & now onlv fairy's dwell in the Island of a dream.

C. Bronte October 6 1829

CHAPTER THREE

About a year after the school rebellion the following wonderful thing happened in the family of the Duke of Wellington, one pleasant morning in the month of September 1828 the Marquis of Douro & Lord Charles Wellesley went out to follow the sport of shooting. they had promised to return before 8 o'clock but however 10 o'clock came & they had not returned: 12 & still no signs of them. Old man Cockney then ordered the servant's to-bed & when they had retired & all was quietness he went into the great hall & sat down by the fire determined not to go to bed till they came back. he had sat about half an hour listening anxiously for their arrival when the inner door gently opened, and lady Wfellesley appeared. Old Man could see by the light of the fire for he had put out the candle that she was very pale & much agitated .

"What is the matter madam?" said he lady wfellesley "I was sitting down working when suddenly I saw the light cast on my work by the taper turn blue & death like burning phosphorous or asphaltasf. I looked up & saw the figure's of my sons all bloody & distorted. I gazed on them till they vanished unable to speak or stir & then I came down here".

she had scarcely finished the recital of this strange vision when the great door was heard to open with a loud, creaking noise & the Duke of. Wellington, entredf. he stood still for a moment earnestly looking at l ady Wellesley & the Old man & then said in a distinctly audible but hollow tone of voice "Catherine where are my son's, for I heard while sitting in my study their voices moaning and wailing around me & supplicating me to deliver them from the death they were about to die, even now I feel a dreadful foreboding concerning them which I cannot shake off. Catherine were are they?"

Before lady Wellesley could answer the door again opened & we appearedf. he immediately addressed us & begged of us to tell him what had become of them. we replied that we "did not know but that if he liked we would go in search of them". he thanked us gratefully adding that he would go with us & then after he had taken leave of lady Wfellesley we immediately set off.

we had gone as near as we could about? 4 miles when we entred a very wild barren plain which none of us had ever seen beforef. we continued on this plain till we lost sight of every thing else & then suddenly perceived the whole aspect of the sky to be changed . it assumed the appearance of large rolling waves crested with white foam also we could hear a thundering sound like the roaring of the sea at a distance & the moon seemed a great globe of many miles in diameter, we were gazing in silent astonishment at this glorious sight which every minute was growing grander & grander & the noise of thunder was increasing when suddenly the huge waves parted asunder & a giant clothed in the sun with a crown of 12 stars on his head descended on the plainf.'6 for a moment our sight was destroyed by the glory of his apparel & when it was restored to us we found ourselves in a world the beauty of which exceeds beyond my powers of description, there were trees & bowers of light, waters of liquid crystal flowing over sands of gold with a sound the melody of which far exceeds music of the finesft toned harps or the song of the sweet voiced nightingales . the re were palaces of emerald & of ruby of diamond of amethyst and pearl arches like the rainbow of jaspar agate & saphire spanning wide seas whose mighty voices where now hushed into a gentle murmur & sang in sweet unison with the silver streams which flowed through this radiant land while their glorious song was echoed & reechoed by high mountains which rose in the distance & which shone in the glowing light like fine opals set in gold.

we had been here for a short time when the sky blackned the winds rose the waves of the ocean began to roar. all beautiful things vanished & were succeeded by tall dark cypress & fir trees which swayed to & fro in the wind with a mournful sound like the moans of dying mortalsf. a huge black rock appeared before us & a wide & dark cavern opened in it in which we saw Afrthur & Charles Wfellesley. the Giant then came again & taking them & us in his arms flew swiftly through the air & landed us all in the great hall of Strathfeildsay.

CHAPTERFOUR

It was a beautiful evening in the month of August when the Duke of Wellington & his sons were seated in a small private parlour at the top of the great round tower at Strathfieldsay. the sun was just setting & its beams shone through the gothic window half veiled by a green velvet curtain which had fallen from the golden supports & hung in rich festoons with a glowing brilliance equal to the crimson light which streams from the oriental ruby but unlike to that beautiful gem it was every moment decreasing in splendour till at length only a faint rose tint remained on the marble pedestal which stood opposite bearing the statue of William Pitt & which but a little while ago had shone with a brightness resembling the lustre of burnished gold. Just as the last ray disappeared lord Charles Wellesley exclaimed, "Father I wish you would relate to us some of your adventures either in India or Spain."

"Very well I will Charles now listen attentively" replied his Grace, "would you like to hear too Arthur?"

"I should very much" answered the Marquis with a gravity & calmness which formed a striking contrast to the giddy gaiety that marred the deportment of his younger brother, his Grace began as follows:

"In the year & the day of the battle of Salamanca⁷ just as the sun set & the twilight was approaching I finished my despatches & walked forth from the convent gates of the Rector of Salamanca in order to enjoy the coolness of a Spanish evening, to this purpose I proceeded through the city till I came to the outside of its walls & then strolled heedlessly along by the clear stream of the Tormes following as it led until I found my self far away from the city & on the borders of a great wood which stretched over many high hills to the verge of the horizon: there was a small pathway cut through this forest, which I entered striding over the river which had now dwindled into a diminutive rill, strictly speaking this was not a prudent step nor one which I should advise you my sons if ever you should be in the like circumstances to take, for the evening was far advanced & the bright light of the beautiful horizon cast an uncertain glowing glare on everything which made travelling through a dark wood which I knew nothing of exceeding dangerous, the country was likewise much infested with daring robbers & organized banditti who dwelt in such lonely situations, but there was a sort of charm upon me which led me on in spite of myself. After I had proceeded about a quarter of a mile I heard a sound like music at a distance which in a short time died away, but when I had got very deep into the forest it rose again & then it sounded nearer, I sat down under a large spreading maple tree whose massive limbs & foliage were now beginning to be irradiated by the moonlight which peirced into the depths of the forest & highly illumined with its beams the thick darkness. I had not sat here long when suddenly the music which had till then sounded soft & low like the preluding of a fine musician on a sweet instrument, broke out into a loud deep strain which resembled the pealing of a full toned organ when its rich floods of sound are rolling & swelling in the sublime Te Deum & echoing amid the lofty aisles & high Dome of some grand Cathedral with a deep solemn noise like the loud awful rumbling & terrible thunder. Or the sudden burst of that most sublime of all music martial music when the ringing trumpet & the rolling drum are sounding together with the fierce onset of a brave & noble army, then you feel the grandeur of the battle amid the lightning and roar of the canon the glancing of sword's & lances & the thunder of the living cataract of men & horses rushing terribly to victory who stands arrayed in bloody garments with a crown of glory upon her head, but to proceed with my story, no sooner had this loud concert sounded than the dark forest vanished like mists of the morning before the sun's brightness & slowly there rose up on my sight a huge mirror, in which were dimly shadowed the forms of clouds & vapours all dense & black, rolling one over the other in dark & stormy grandeur & among them in letters of lightning I saw the "Futurity", by degrees these clouds cleared away & a fair & beautiful Island appeared in their stead rising out of the midst of a calm & peaceful Ocean & linked to it by a golden chain was another equal in beauty but smaller.' in the middle of the largest of these 2 Islands was a tall & majestic female seated on a throne of ruby crowned with roses bearing in one hand a wreath of Oak-leaves & in the other a sword, while over her the tree of liberty flourished spreading its branches far & wide & casting the perfume of its flowers to the uttermost parts of the earth. In the midst of the other Island there was likewise a female who sat on an emerald throne, her crown was formed of shamrocks, in her right hand she held an harp & her robes were of a crimson hue as if they had been dyed in blood, she was as majestic as the other but in her countenance was some thing very sad & sorrowful, as if a terrible evil hung upon her — over her head where the boughs of a dark cypress instead of the pleasant tree which shaded the other Island, & sometimes she swept the chords of the harp causing a wild & mournful sound to issue therefrom like a death wail or dirge, while I was wondering at her grief, I perceived a tremendous monster rise out of the sea and land on her Island. as soon as it touched the shores a lamentable cry burst forth which shook both Islands to their centre & the Ocean all round boiled furiously as if some terrible earthquake had happened, the monster was black & hideous & the sound of his roaring was like thunder. he was clothed in the skin of wild beasts & in his forehead was branded as with a hot iron the word bigotry, in one hand he held a scythe & as soon as he entered the land the work of desolation began: all pleasantness & beauty disappeared from the face of the country & pestilential morasses came in their stead, he seemed to pursue with inveterate fury a horrible old man who a voice whispered in my ear was called the Romish Religion, at first he seemed weak & impotent but as he ran he gathered strength & the more he was persecuted the stronger he became till at length he began with a terrible voice to defy his persecutor & at the same time strove to break the golden chain which united the two Islands. & now I saw the form of a warrior approaching whose likeness I could by no means discern but over whom a mighty shield was extended from the sky. he came near to the monster whose name was bigotry & taking a dart on which the word justice was written in golden characters he flung it at him with all his might. the dart had struck in the heart & he fell with a loud groan to the earth, as soon as he had fallen the warrior whose brow had already many wreaths on it was crowned by a hand which proceeded from a golden cloud with a fresh one of amaranths interwoven with laurel. at the same time the two spirits arose from their thrones & coming towards him they cast garlands & crowns of victory at his feet while they sung his praises in loud & glorious notes. meantime the desolated land was again overspread with pleasant pastures & green woods & sunny plains watered by clear rivers flowing with a gentle sound over green rocks?, while the wild harp pealed in sweetly swelling tones among the branches of the tree of liberty. the sound ceased & lo I was beneath the maple tree & a nightingale was serenading me with its beautiful song which caused me to dream of sweet music C B November 21st Anno Domini 1829

Adieu Adios?

CHAPTER FIVE

In the year 1722 In the pleasant month of June, four⁹ Inhabitants of fairy-land took it into their heads for a treat to pay a visit to the inhabitants of the earth. In order to accomplish this end they took the form of mortals, but first it was necessary to obtain leave of Oberon & Titania, their King & Queen. accordingly they demanded an audience of their majesties & where admitted. They stated their wish & petition which was immediately granted & they prepared to depart.

Having descended to the earth in a cloud they alighted in a part of England which was very mountainous & quite uninhabited. they proceeded along for some time till they came to the verge of a rock that looked down into a beautiful vale below, through it ran a clear & pleasant stream which followed the vale in all its narrow windings among the high dark mountains which bordered it & the massive branching trees which grew in thick clumps casting a cool & agreeable shade over all the valley, through these it meandered with a rippling sound until when the glen broke from its confinement among them & spread into a wide green plain all dotted with great white poplars & stately oaks & spangled with pearly daisies & golden buttercups among which likewise occasionally peeped out the pale primrose or the purple violet, it also expanded into a broader & deeper current rolling or rather gliding on with a still murmur that resembled the voice of some water spirit heard from the depths of its coral palaces when it sings in lonely silence after the sea has ceased to heave & toss in terrible black beauty & night walks in awful majesty on the face of the earth all clothed in stars while Luna sheds pale light from her silver lamp to illumine the pathway of the dark & stately queen. In the midst of this valley there was a small thatched cottage which had once been the pleasant abode of a flourishing husbandman who was now dead & his children had one by one forsaken it & the sweet spot where it stood each to pursue his own fortune till it was now entirely deserted & had fallen into a state of ruin & decay. The fairies proceeded down the vale towards the cottage & when they arrived there began to examine it. the walls where all grey & moss grown; vine tendrils where still visible among the wreaths of ivy which clasped around the door-way & one silver star of a jessamine peeped out from among the dark leaves, the little garden was all grown over with nettles & rank weed & no trace remained of its former beauty except a single rose bush on which still bloomed a few half wild roses & beside it grew a small strawberry plant with two or three scarlet strawberry upon it forming a fine contrast to the desolation which surrounded them.

In this place the fairies determined to take up their abode, which they accordingly did & they had not been long there when the following occurrence happened, they were sitting one evening round the fire of their hut (for being now in the form of mortals they acted like them) listening to the wind which moaned in hollow cadences as it swept along the valley & its voice was sometimes mingled with strange sounds which they well knew were the voices of spirits rising in the air invisible to the dull eyes of mortals. They were sitting as I said before around the fire of their hut when suddenly they heard a low knocking at the door, one of them immediately rose to open it & a man appeared clothed in a travellers cloak. they enquired what he wanted, he replied that he had lost his way in the glen & that seeing the light stream across his path from their cottage he had stopped there & now requested shelter till the morning when he might be able to pursue his journey with the advantage of daylight, his request was immediately granted & as soon as he was seated they asked what the cause of his travelling was? he replied that if they chose he would relate to them his whole history as he could perceive that they were persons of no ordinary description & might perhaps be able to assist him in his distress. they consented & he began as follows.

"I am the son of a gentleman of great fortune & estate who resided in one of the southernmost counties of Ireland. My father & mother were both Roman catholics & I was brought up in that faith & continued in it until I became convinced of the error of the creed I professed. My father's confessor was a man of strange and unsociable habits and was thought by those among whom he dwelt to have converse with the inhabitants of another world. he had received his education in Spain & it was supposed that in the country he had learnt the science of necromancy." the manner in which I became converted to the protestant religion was as follows, There lived in our family an old servant who unknown to my father was a seceder from the Roman catholic church & a member of the church of England. One day I unexpectedly entered the room & surprised him reading his bible. I immediately remonstrated with him on the impropriety of what he was about & desired him to leave of telling him that it was against the laws of the true church and contrary to the admonitions of our preist.² he replied mildly but firmly quoting many passages of scripture in defence of what he did & arguing in such a manner as to convince me that I was in the wrong. Next day I paid him a visit at the same hour & found him similarly employed. I had a long conversation with him, the effect of which was to induce me to search the bible for myself : I did so and there discovered that the doctrines of the church of England where those which most closely assimilated with the word of God, those doctrines I accordingly determined to embrace. As soon as my conversion became known my father strove to dissuade me from it, but I remained steadfast & resolute? In a short time he ceased to trouble me. But Not so with the confessor: he was constantly advancing arguments to induce me to recant but failing he made use of the following expedient, As a last resource. I was standing one evening in the court of my fathers house, when suddenly I heard a voice whisper in my ear "come this night to the great moor at 12 o'clock". I turned round but could see no body. I then debated with myself what it could be & whether I should go or not. I at length determined to go & when the clock struck eleven I set off. the moor alluded to lay about four miles off, It was a wide barren heath stretching 3 leagues to the northward. In a short time I reached it. The night was very dark no moon was visible & the stars where only dimly seen through the thin cloudy vapours that sailed over the sky veiling the dark azure with a sombre robe & casting a melancholy gloom on the path beneath . all around me was silent except a little stream flowing unseen among the heather with a sound resembling the hoarse incessant murmur which the sea shell retains of its native caverns where the green billows of the deep are roaring & raging with an eternal thunder. I had not waited long when slowly I saw rising around me the dim form of a sacred abbey, the stately pillars, the long drawn sweeping aisles, the echoing dome, & the holy altar all arose in gradual & mysterious order while a solemn & supernatural light stole through the high arched windows & beamed full upon a tomb which stood in the centre & which I knew to be my grandfathers. I was gazing at these things in wrapt & silent astonishment when suddenly I saw a tall white robed figure standing upon the monument. it beckoned to me with its hand: I approached & It then addressed me in the following words "Son why have you deserted the Ancient & holy

Religion of your ancestors to embrace a strange one which you know not of” I was going to reply when at that moment I perceived the confessor standing near. I instantly comprehended the whole scheme & exclaimed in a loud voice “your wiles are discovered. the faith I profess is true and I well know that this is all necromancy” when the preist heard this he flew into a terrible rage & stamping with his foot a fire sprung out of the groundf. he then threw some perfumes on it & said in a voice made tremulous by ungovernable fury “depart hence Vile heretic” & imediately I found myself in this valley. You know the rest.”

here the traveller stopped & little more is known of the story except that the fairies restored him to his family who became devout members of the Church of England . the preist afterwards disappeared in a very unaccountable way & the fairies no longer dwell in that little hut of which only a mossy remnant now remains but the tradition still lives in many a peasants fireside tale when gloomy winter has apparelled the earth in frost & radiant snow.

This Tale was related to little king & queens Seringapatan old man cockney Gamekeeper Jack of all trades & orderly man by the Marquis of Duro & lord C. Wellesley as they sat by the fire at the Great hall of Strathfeildsay C. Bronte December 2 1829

THIRD VOLUME OF TALES OF THE ISLANDERS

CHAPTER ONE

One evening the duke of Wellington was writing in his room at Downing Street. Eldon reposed at his ease in an ample easy chair smoking a homely tobacco pipe (for he disdained all the modern frippery of cigars &c &c) beside a blazing fire whose flames left had just been feeding by a fresh supply of Londonderry's black diamonds. One armed Hardinge stood at his desk awkwardly scrawling an army estimate on a gilt-edged sheet of Bath post, coxcomical Roslyn lounged against the polished green marble mantlepiece eyeing with ineffable contempt the quizzical old pekin who sat opposite & occasionally casting a sidelong glance at his own dandy figure reflected in a magnificent mirror suspended against the wall which was hung with purple figured velvet; Castlereagh seated on a turkish Ottoman whined & yawned incessantly while Mr Secretary Peel perched upon a treasury tripod close beside his Grace kept whispering & wheedling in the Dukes ear until at length happening to interrupt him in the midst of an abstruse calculation he saw his masters eye suddenly flash on him & without further warning was at the other end of the room in a twinkling. At this tragical catastrophe, Roslyn slunk back to his desk which he had quitted without leave from head quarters. Hardinge just gave a keck over his shoulder at the prostrate civillian. Eldon ceased puffing holding up his withered hands half in fear & half in wonder Castlereagh crawled of the cushion under the table where he lay quietly down & the Duke of Wellington without noticing the general consternation relapsed into his former occupation of unraveling a confused mass of exchequer-like figures left by poor Vesey in a sad state of disorder when he was seized with the sickness which superannuated him.

while they were thus employed a heavy footstep was heard without, the door opened & a little shrunk old woman wrapped up & wholly concealed except her face entered, her appearance excited no surprise for this was one of the famous little queens, she advanced up to the duke & presented him a letter written with blood & sealed with a seal on which was the motto "le message d'un revenant". he took it respectfully & read it, while he was doing this he changed colour several times evincing an uncontrollable emotion. when he had finished he rose & walked about as if trying to calm his mind. suddenly he stopped & commanded all present to depart they immediately obeyed, then after a pause he demanded of the fairy if that letter was true or a forgery. She made a sign with her hand & immediately the king & the 2 other queens appeared. they all knelt down. each drew out a wand wreathed with ivory ; they kissed them & said " it is by virtue of these wands we rule the hearts of mortals, we will forfeit them & our spiritual power if what we say is false, that letter is true," when they had uttered these words they vanished.

his Grace immediately rang a bell & ordered the attendant who answered the summons to get ready the swiftest horse in his stables, his mandates were presently obeyed & the Duke clad in a Georgian mantle with a broad milliatry belt, brass helmet & high black plumes, mounted the spirited animal spurred him to full gallop & in a short time left London & its suburbs far behind, he rode with such speed that when the sun rose he beheld the towers of Strathfeildsay rearing their proud heads ruddy with the first beams of morning from the ancient oak forests which surrounded them, all his wide domains were stretched before his eyes, the peaceful village nestling among venerable woods, the wide fruitful fields extending to the verge of the horizon, the stately trees darkning the scene with their shadow the white cottages looking out from the bowery retreat of their orchards & the great river refreshing everything as it passed, all were his own won by his invincible sword, the monuments of England's gratitude to her glorious preserver.

he passed quickly on & in a short time arrived at the dark gate, the old soldiers cottages removed a little way from the narrow path could hardly be distinguished by reason of the large trees on each side whose thick drooping branches now in full verdure had shot out & increased to such a degree as wholly to surround them with a fresh verdant barrier & their situation was only marked by the tall round grey chimnies one of which (that on the right hand) belonging to Seringapatan was just breathing a light dun smoke on the stainless ether. The other stood in motionless silence for the inhabitants thereof to wit Jack of all trades, Orderly-man & Gamekeeper where for the present tarrying at the more noisy and to their dispositions (unlike that of their bookish neighbour) more congenial Horse- gaurds.

his grace was just in the act of raising a huge bough which guarded the righthand doorway for the purpose of entring, when he heard a light buoyant step & a sweet voice at a distance carolling the following words:

O Where has Arthur been this night Why did he not come home For long the suns fair orb of light hath shone in heavens dome Beneath the greenwood tree he's slept his tester was the sky O'er him the midnight stars have wept bright dewdrops from on high And when the first faint streak of day did in the east appear His eyes touched by the mornings ray Shone out with lustre clear He rose & from his dark brown hair He shook the glit'ring gems Which natures hand had scattered there as on the forest stems The flowers sent up an odour sweet as forth he stately stepped The stag sprang past more light & fleet the hare through brushwood crept

here the voice suddenly stopt. all the trees which bordered the path rustled & Lord Charles Wellesley bounded by with so much buoyancy merriment & elasticity that he hardly seemed to touch the ground, his rosy face was radiant with smiles his large bright sparkling blue eyes seemed the transparent palaces of cheerfulness - his parted ruby lips mantling with mirth displayed a row of teeth whiter than the finest oriental pearl . his forehead fair as ivory was shaded by ringlets of gold which hung in beautiful clusters over his temples & his form was the very emblem of aerial symetry. He passed the Duke without observing him as he was hid by a tall black cypress. His Grace stepped forward & called him by his name; immediately the light gay being arrested his swift course or rather flight as soon as he heard his father's voice & turned round.

“Good morning my son where are you going?” Said the Duke “O Dear Dear father” exclaimed he “I’m so glad to see you I’m going to seek Arthur who has never been home since last evening.”

“never been home since last evening! it is true then they have not deceived me” replied his Grace & the dark sorrowful cloud which for a moment had been dissipated by the presence of his cheerful son shadowed his noble brow more gloomily than before. “Charles your brother is in danger of death”² he said solemnly.

“In danger of Death!” repeated Charles & immediately all gladness forsook his face & dim tears veiled his lustrous eyes. his face turned pale as ashes & sinking on the ground he exclaimed as well as agonizing grief would permit him “O Arthur must not die! Little queens can & shall save him. I will find Mystery²⁴ wherever he lives. Where is Arthur father Where is he? Ill die if he dies, for I cannot live without him.”

“Hush Charles hush” said his Grace raising him from the earth “come with me into Seringapatans cottage. I will try to save Arthur.”

by this time Seringapatam hearing the moans & sobs of Lord Wellesley had come out of his house. When he saw the Duke supporting his son who was weeping incessantly he was somewhat alarmed & exclaimed “poor thing he seems faintish whats the matter my Lord? has a pekin been hurting him? where is the Wretch? let me scald him in boiling lead but stop Id better fetch a drink of something for hes rather white in the face.”

“No no Seringapatam take him into your house a little while, I wish to speak to you.”

“O Pray come in My lord” replied the old veteran rearing him

self proudly at the thought of a secret & flinging the door wider open. “ there’s nought new to listen at peoples keyholes for them at lived over the way’s at London. “

When they had entred he put two chairs by the fire wiping them with a dishcloth & spreading a peice of carpet over the hearth . he then pulled a pillow from the bedhead & placed it in one chair saying that if lord Charles felt weakly he might lean on it. When they were in he closed the door bolted & locked it & then sat down on a threelegged stool at his masters feet.

“Seringapatam” said his Grace “I beleive you to be an honourable & upright man, faithful to my interests & grateful for the favours I have done you. therefore I will now trust you with a secret of great importance, last night I received a mysterious letter purporting to be from the spirit of my dead father, it stated that Arthur the eldest of my children and your future Lord having in the course of his melancholy wanderings, been drawn by the power of a secret fascination into the abode of supernatural beings, is at this moment suffering all the torments which they can devise & that if you did not go with me to a particular place which I am acquainted with certain death will befall him & I now require you by your allegiance to me and mine to obey my comands in everything. f here the Duke stopped & Seringapatam, falling on his knees solemnly promised to follow all his orders not only at the present time, but until he should draw his last breath, the Duke then turned to Charles & asked him if he would go also, UI would willingly die to save Arthurs life” replied the young Lord ardently while a beam of hope lighted his glistening eyes.” his father patted his curly head & smiled on him approveinly.

In a few moments they were ready & when Seringapatam had locked his cottage door they set out at a quick pace on their journey, in a little while they had emerged from the forest & after crossing several hay & cornfeilds together with a large belt of meadow land & orchards that surrounded the village they entred a very wide plain on which only a few scattered sheep where visible & even these in a short time ceased to present themselves to the eye. as they went on the towers and woods of Strathfeildsay gradually sank beneath the horizon the high church steeple lessend & receded till it became invisible the enclosed feilds & orchards vanished in the distance & aft length only the flat plain beneath & the arched sky above remained for their sight to rest upon.

On this plain they continued till evening when they arrived at a place where were huge rocks rising perpendicularly to an imense heightf; a vast cataract rolling thunderously down the precipices hollowed for itself a bason in the solid stone beneath & the waters rushing over dashed furiously onwards for some time until aft length smoothning & widening they glided peacefully along a lovely valley which opened by degrees to the right hand, it was shaded with sycamore trees & young oaks through which the rays of the setting sun now beamed with a rich lustre on the subsiding wavelets of the river imparting to it the beautiful appearance of liquid gold, they proceeded to mount a narrow rugged sheep-path winding up one of the rocks till they came to a kind of plateau covered with herbage above which the rocks rising to a dizzy height appeared wholly inaccessible.

here the Duke suddenly stopped & commanded Seringapatam & lord Wellesley to halt as it was not nessessary for them to proceed further, this he said in a tone which both his son & servant understood; it was not angry nor hardly stern, but it had a decisive sound in it which showed that no entreaties would prevail with him to let them go on. they accordingly sat down on the grass without speaking & watched him with earnest eyes for they saw it was impossible for any mortal man unassisted by supernatural power to scale the perpendicular wall of even stone which they beheld, about y yards distant from the plateau was a projecting fragment that hung over the valley beneath. it was however exceedingly narrow and such a tremendous height from the ground that this together with its distance from the little plain where they were made it perfectly improbable that any living being should dare the horrible leap which must be made before they could reach it.

The Duke stood for a moment gazing eagerly around as if searching for some means to attain his end: at length fixing his eyes on the fragment he quickly threw of his dark mantle which till now he had kept closely wrapped about him & advancing to the border of the plateau sprang from it to the ledge in an instant as if the spirit of an Izard or chamois²⁶ had been suddenly granted to him. When lord Wellesley saw his father perform his daring action to which he was prompted & encouraged by the desire to save his eldest son a smothered scream burst from his lips, the Duke looked round notwithstanding his perilous situation & looking on him with compassion he said “my dear Charles do not fear for me; in a short time I shall return with Arthur perfectly safe & well.” then turning a corner of the rock he disapeard from their sight.

Continuing on his course which became more dangerous at every step he at length arrived at a vast Cavern the entrance of which was closed with Iron doors: these rolled back as he advanced & admitted him into an imense hall of stone. he entred the doors closed after him & he found himself alone in this strange apartment dimly lighted by a blue flame in the middle, huge massive pillars rose to the vaulted roof: their capitals were ornamented with human skulls & crossbones their shafts were in the form of grisly skeletons &

their bases were Shaped like tombstones, the hall was so long that he was unable to see the end & as he walked to & fro he heard the echoing of his footsteps at a distance as if the sound was reflected by vaults or cells, after a considerable time the noise of an opening door was heard - light well known footsteps fell on his ear & in another moment he embraced his beloved son. almost at the same instant they found themselves on the plateau were Seringapatan & lord Wellesley anxiously waited for them.

the meeting between the two brothers was joyful in the extreme & after a short time spent in tears of gladness & affectionate congratulating the whole party returned in saftety to Strathfeildsay. to all the questions put to the marquis respecting his sufferings while in that cave his invariable answer has been that they were indiscribable.

CB May 5 1830

CHAPTER TWO

MAY 6 1830

It was a bright afternoon in August 1829 when the Duke of Wellington rose from the dry wearisome occupation of composing & copying state documents (better fitted for the mind of a Jhon Herries or a P. Courtney than his lofty & energetic spirit) which employment he had constantly followed for above 3 months without any relaxation whatsoever. After locking his writing desk and placing all the papers in order, he determined forthwith to proceed to the Horseguards. For tired of the tedious dull society of gentlemen in office & creeping crawling clerks; ready & even ambitious to lick the dust beneath his feet, he longed once more to breathe the fresh free millitary air of that privileged retreat of all the great Field marshals Generals staff officers & colonels now alive. Just as he had formed his resolution the door of his apartment opened & little king & queens entered in their usual form, they accosted him with, "Duke of Wellington come to the Horseguards: we are going there & we wish you to accompany us in order that you may point out all that is worth seeing."

"I was just about to proceed thither," replied his Grace "& shall be much honoured by your society."

In a few moments they set out & after a quarter of an hour's walk reached the place of their destination, the gate was closed but a soldier who stood by, immediately hastened to open it as soon as he saw his Grace approach presenting arms & making a low bow. They entered & it was shut after them, the yard of the Horse guards was covered with rough stones & gravel 2 or 3 sentinels were pacing about occasionally turning their eyes towards a lofty triangle & fixed at one end on which a poor soldier was undergoing the lash of the cat-o'-nine-tails¹⁷ inflicted by the merciless hand of orderly-man who stood with his shirt sleeves rolled up exerting every sinew in the cause of cruelty.

"What crime has that fellow been guilty of to bring on his head or rather his back such a bloody punishment?" exclaimed the Duke as he walked towards the instrument of torture.

"He has been making faces at Lord Hill when he told him to lick the dust of his shoes," replied Orderly-man halting for a moment.

"Lord Hills a scoundrel!" replied his Grace in the first place for flogging a man because he refused to commit a crime (which that he commanded him to do would have been) & in the second place for ordering you to triangle him which none but I have a right to. Take that wretch down instantly orderly-man. Bring Lord Hill & set him in his place."

For the first time in his life Orderly-man hesitated to obey his masters mandates, casting the whip on the ground he sighed deeply tears came into his glittering gray eyes & marks of evident grief & disappointment appeared on his rugged countenance;

"What is the matter?" said the Duke in the utmost surprise. "I should think the fellow was absolutely under the influence of witchcraft: why don't you fly like lightning to execute my command?"

For a few moments he was unable to reply. At length a flood of tears came to his relief & then the following words intermixed with sobs & moans made their way.

"Well my lord its baking day today & I was just beginning to make a good currant cake when Lord Hill called me off to triangle this beast & now when I've done that I'm forced to triangle him too & my cake will be eaten by Seringapatan or some other horrid glutton in the Baking-room while I shall have none at all though I bought the stuff it's made of," here as if touched by the recital of his own misfortune he wept anew, the Duke of Wellington laughed aloud & placing his hand on his shoulder told him not to break his heart as he would give him something better than a peice of Bread - Orderly-man consoled by this assurance hastened to obey his lord & in a few minutes Hill suspended from the triangle suffered the penalty of his crime.

Little King & queens understanding from the previous conversation that it was baking day in the Horseguards expressed a wish to go into the room where the bread was prepared & made ready.

"Your majesties are perfectly at liberty to do so if you please" said his Grace "provided my attendance can be dispensed with, as I never frequent the apartments where the soldiers cook their food," very well Duke of Wellington we can do without you" replied the fairies angrily & immediately quitting him in an abrupt manner they entered the Horseguards & proceeded to the Bakehouse. It was a large room built of brick without any ceiling so that all the great beams & rafters that formed the roof were exposed to the eye & paved after the fashion of streets & thoroughfares, a fire of a sufficient size & fierceness to roast an ox was blazing at one end. A long table ran down the centre at which 2 or 3 hundred soldiers were standing busily employed in the manufacture of coarse loaves & cakes; at the head on a high rustic tripod sat a very old man apparently more than six feet in height with muscles as strong & supple as those of Hercules & bones as big as a mammoth's. His grizzled grey hairs were drawn all together tied with a peice of a rope and plaited into a long queue behind, his nose was like an eagles beak when by reason of its age the upper mandible has pierced through the under & the venerable possessor unable either to eat or drink lies in its inaccessible eirie made like a charnel house by the blanched bones of those which in its vigorous youth it has slain now - I was going on but I find that the metaphor is too diffuse already. Seringapatan's nose then (for the old man was no other) was exceedingly aquiline & his mouth a scarlet thread stretching from ear to ear & together with his fine large dark expressive eye betokened him of true Milesian origin. He sat on his exalted throne in an attitude of extreme dignity & imperial majesty. His head gently inclined to one side leaned on a hand whose colour the snow might have envied, it being of a dark tawny red. One foot lay on the far side of the table & the other on the head of a horrible wretch who had ventured to rebel against his high power but who at length having succumbed from a gentle intimation that tomorrow at drilltime he should suffer for his impudence, was now doing penance for his black crime. When Seringapatan spoke he invariably stretched out his right arm intwining the elegant action of all the great Grecian Roman British & Hibernian orators.

After little king & queen's had viewed this scene for some time they left the room & proceeded to find out the Duke of Wellington, they found him in the public apartment for the officers, it was an ample rotunda carpeted with green cloth, a large brass lustre suspended from the roof was covered with the accumulated dust of several years, a billiard table stood in the middle about which a number of officers sat playing or talking. The Duke was standing at one end of the room surrounded by Lords Rosslyn Berresford,

Sommerset & Arthur Hill together with Generals Murray Hardinge Londonderry Fitzroy &c &c. Rosslyn was just delivering an enconium upon his Grace in the following words.

"My Lord when you appear a mist seems withdrawn from my eyes. You are as the clear splendor of the sun shining after rain. the dark clouds hasten at your approach to mingle with the swelling waves of the deep from whence they came & to whence they will return, a hundred flowers Whose beautiful heads drooped beneath the fury of the storm & whose radiant colours waned as it beat upon them, raise again their slender stems unfurl their emerald leaflets & hold up their golden crowns towards the first beam of light which heralds your appearance that they may be filled with loveliness & joy for lo you have already glorified the last drops of the departing shower into a faint but fast brightning rainbowf. as I gaze on that mighty apparition spanning the whole earth & heaven, a solemn sign that the victorious waters shall never again roar triumphantly over the worlds highest mountain which clave the clouds with their summits or roll in her pleasant valleys the palaces of beauty & silence. I think by a mysterious conection of the humble snowdrop both the arch of the sky & the first blossom of spring are alike in their origin, though one be a child of heaven & the other of earth, for each is "rocked by the storm & cradled by the blast" Eh? my lord is not that very pretty?" said he & at that moment he certainly bore a much greater resemblance to a monkey than a man.

"Rosslyn" replied the Duke smiling sarcastically "you have certainly out done yourself to day though I am afraid if a jackal? or a mandrill a pinch or a pigmy could be brought to speak it would still surpass you in giving utterance to all that is conceited & devoid of sense in the compass of Apish phraseology. But sir & I am now serious if you bother me again with such language more resembling the watry scum of a weak whining poetaster's28 brains than the conversation of an officer of sense & spirit or even of a civilian whose capacities are but mediocre in every respect I shall certainly allow you the privelige of showing off some elegant French atitudes scrapes & bows wether of the head or the back will I presume be perfectly imaterial on a triangle formed of deserters halberts exposed to the view & derision of the whole regiment of the gaurds. You will likewise Sir be expected to attend drill every day to officiate as caller of the muster roll to clean your own arms & accoutrements without the aid of any menial attendant, to associate with the common shoe blacks valets & soultlers? of the army in order that you may teach them the polite art of elocution besides improving their general maners by your elegant example & finally you will be cashiered for a few months to the end that you may enjoy your favourite solituted which will perhaps enable you to produce more masterly specimens of ryhming than you have hitherto favoured us with.f here his Grace stopped. all the generals around stood staring contemptuously at Roslyn & when he happened to come near any of them they shrank from his touch as if he was infectious not deigning to speak to him for a moment. Seeing their strange conduct & hearing the words of his master the poor wretch burst into a flood of tears sobbed aloud & then as if unable to contain himself he ran out of the room as fast as he was able & a few minutes after he was heard at a distance singing the following verses

To the forest to the wilderness Ah let me hasten now Wher'e I go I still shall see My master's lowering brow
The Woods black shade won't hide my greif No influence now I have But 'th stream will give more quick releif I'll seek a watry grave
Unto the shore I'll swiftly fly I'll plunge into the sea The foam bells will ascend on high When drowning sets me free

Drown all the ills which life doth give O mis'ry in me dwells when no longer shall I live The tide of sorrow swells

Suspended from an elm tree tall I'll end my mournful life My soul more bitter is than gall My heart is full of strife

I'll cut my neck with some sharp blade I'll swallow poison dire No now my resolution's made I'll set myself on fire

Just then a loud noise was heard in an adjoining apartment & Game keeper came rushing into the room exclaiming that Lord Rosslyn had thrown himself into the fire but that he had been pulled out before he was hurt.

"take him" replied the Duke of Wellington "to the lowest dungeon keep him there & feed him on nothing but bread & water for a month." His Grace then quitted the room & little King & queens followed him.

"Where are you going?" said they.

"to Arthur's appartmentf he replied "will your majesties honour me by your company?"

"yes" they answered shortly & in a few minutes after mounting a flight of stone steps they arrived at the end of a long gallery terminated by a door which when opened discovered a small antichamber, where was an arched entrance veiled by a curtain of thick green baize, the Duke undrew the curtain & a most elegant but rather small saloon presented itself, the floor was spread with a rich persian carpet, low sofas surrounded the room covered with green satin elegantly embroidered in needle work. A Dome tastefully painted in the arabesque style formed the roof, several stands of beautiful white marble supported alabaster vases of the finest & most fragrant flowers. On the Parian mantle peice stood a number of images clasically designed & well executed in Japan china & on a hearth slab of costly Tabruz? marble were ranged magnificent porphory, lapis lazuli and agate vessels filled with the most exquisite perfumes the East can supply, all the windows were shaded with orange & myrtle trees which grew in large pots of Seville china, at one of these were seated the Marquis of Douro & Lord Wellesly. the former was habited in the uniform of his regiment, imperial blue & gold, the latter in white silk lightly bordered with green & a purple mantle fastened on one shoulder by an ornament of saphire & emerald.

As soon as his Grace entred they both started up joyfully welcoming him to their peaceful retreat from the noisy & turbulent Rotunda. In a few minutes he sat down & then after a short silence he observed "What a luxurious place this is Arthur quite unfited I assure you my son to prepare a man for those hardships which every one has to encounter during some part of his life."

"O faterf" exclaimed lord Charles "Arthur will always make hardships if he has not them ready at hand. ever since he has been here (that is 3 hours) I have not observed a single smile on his countenance & after tiring myself to no purpose with trying to make him speak I was forced to open the window & amuse myself by talking to every person who passed in the court below . at last that resource failed me for no living creature showed its head & therefore shutting the sash I sat down again remained silent for half an hour & then finding that hypochondriasm was fast approaching upon me I got up smelt at every flower & perfume in the appartment danced shook the orange branches sung merry songs, stamped, raged, wept, mimicked Arthur, screamed smiled became hysterical fainted & at last finding all my efforts fruitless to provoke him to utter the smallest monosyllable I flung myself exhausted on a seat & remained staring frantically at Arthur till you entred when to my inexpressible joy I saw him rise & open his lips to welcome you.f The Duke of Wellington remained for about an hour at the Horse- gaurds & then returned to Downing Street where he found a bundle of official documents awaiting his arrival, these he imediately sat down to decipher & at this employment I shall for the present leave him.

C Bronte May the 8th 1830

THIRD VOLUME OF THE TALES of the ISLANDERS

I began this volume on Monday May the third 1830 & finished it on Saturday May the 8 1830
C Bronte 1830

May the 8.

FOURTH VOLUME OF TALES OF THE ISLANDERS

CHAPTER ONE

One fine autumnal evening the duke of Wellington was on his way from LONDON to Strathfeildsay. he had just passed through the village & had entered a narrow bridle-path leading to the park gate, here he dismounted from his horse & leading old Blanco-White by the reins proceeded at a leisurely pace onwards. It was as I have said a fine evening in autumn: the air was warm & breezeless, the sky covered with high light clouds except where here & there a few pale soft blue streaks appeared on the hazy horizon, the sun had just set. the snails were crawling forth from the hedge side to enjoy that refreshing dampness which immediately precedes dusk at this period of the year, scarcely a leaf fell from the oaks & hawthorns bordering the path, for the dark hue of their foliage had hardly begun to mellow with the waning season. The only sounds audible were the noise of an occasional Lady-clock⁹ humming by & the trickle of a rill as it flowed invisibly down an ancient Cart rut (now unused) hid by dock leaves wild vetch grass & other hedge plants with which the road was completely overgrown. A hill rising on one hand concealed from view the Hall with its extensive parks pleasure grounds gardens woods &c situated in a broad & delightful valley sloping far down on the other side.

As the Duke walked quietly forward he suddenly heard a murmuring sound like the voices of several people conversing in an under tone, a little in advance of him. He stopped & listened but was unable to understand what they said, at a few paces farther on a turn in the path brought in sight the figures of 3 old women seated on a green bank under a holly knitting with the utmost rapidity & keeping their tongues in constant motion all the while, stretched in a lounging posture beside them lay little king languidly gathering the violets & cuckoo-meet which grew around, at the Dukes approach he started up as likewise did the old women, they courtesied & he bowed much after the fashion of a Dip-Tail⁰ on a stone. He then after a sharp peal of laughter from his companions addressed the Duke thus.

"Well Duke of Wellington here are three friends of mine whom I wish to introduce to you." "they lived for some time as washerwomen in the family of the late Sir Robert Peel Bart¹ who respected them so much that in his will he remembered them each for twenty guineas. After his death however the present Bart, turned them away together with several other antiquated but faithful servants of his deceased parent, to make room for the modern trash of fopish varlets that now constitute every gentlemen's establishment, thus they are now cast on the wide world without shelter or home & if you would consent to take them into your service it would be conferring a great obligation on me as well as them."

"I am not much accustomed to engage servants" replied his Grace, "but you may take them to my house-keeper & if their characters will bear the old lady's scrutiny I have no objection."

"Very well that's right Duke of Wellington" replied little King, much pleased.

the Duke then remounted his horse & proceeded at a smart trot onward wishing to escape from the company of his new acquaintance, they however stuck close to him & continued by his side talking & laughing & trying to draw him into conversation incessantly, in a short time they turned the hill & going rapidly down a long inclined lane, entered the vast wood which forms a boundary to one side of Strath- feildsay Park - after threading the puzzling mazes of the labyrinth which leads to Seringapatans Orderly-Man's Jack Off A11 Trades' & Game Keeper's cottages they stop at the door of Seringapatans and the Duke stooping his head to avoid the huge thick branches waving around, lifted the latchet. Seringapatan instantly sprang out & bowing low without waiting for his masters orders flung open the park gate. His grace then bent aside & whispered something in the old-mans ear, commanding him to detain little king & his comrades until he reached the hall. Seringapatan bowed again lower than before & the Duke, tickling Blanco's flanks galloped swiftly off.

"If you please will you step into my Kitchen a minute & rest you?" said Seringapatan.

they thanked him & without further ceremony walked in. it was a small apartment neatly white-washed. an oaken dresser furnished with the brightest pewter & delf-ware covered one end; above it was suspended a highly polished musket & sword . several ancient books were carefully piled on a black oak kist. two substantial armchairs stood at each end of a hot, blazing fire & opposite the window seat, a number of stout 3 legged stools were ranged in a row. the floor & hearth were as clean & white as scouring could make them. Mrs Left Seringapatan sat mending her husband stockings by a round deal table. She was clad in a dark green stuff gown with snow- white cap & apron & looked as sedate as if she had been 60 instead of 25.

When little King & the old women entered she rose & begged them to be seated : they complied . after chatting awhile she got up again & went out but in a short time returned with a plateful of rich current cake & a bottle of perry." these dainties she invited her guest's to partake of which they did of course & then prepared to depart. Seringapatan knowing that by this time his Master had arrived at his seat opened the door & permitted them to go. they pursued their way up the park without stopping for night was fast coming on & the moon pouring her light on the long groves & alleys which in dark obscure lines stretched far over the undulating prospect was climbing the mild autumnal heaven's amid freckled downy clouds & dimly visible stars.

It happened that Lord Charles Wellesley had that day been taking one of his wild rambles over his fathers domains & he was now returning home-wards, at a distance he saw the three old women with their conductor, being fond of company he made haste to overtake them but as he approached his volatile mind changed & he determined to walk close behind & remain a concealed listener to their conversation promising himself much amusement from the scheme, in this however he was deceived for voluble as they had been while in Seringapatan's Cottage they now became perfectly silent.

in about a quarter of an hour they reached the deep rapid stream which runs through the grounds. its banks are shaded by willows & larches & the long rays of moonlight trembling through the high boughs fell with sweet serenity on the turbulent waves producing a soothing contrast to their impetuous & dark ridges following each other in quick succession down the waters, a grassy mole extending to the opposite bank formed a kind of natural bridge & over this lord Charles supposed they would go so he halted a while to observe them, they however to his astonishment glided noiselessly to the midst of the river & there turning three times round amidst the shivered fragments of brilliant light in which the moon was reflected were swallowed up in a whirlpool of raging surges & foam, he stood a moment powerless with horror, then springing over the mound dashed through the trees on the other side & gaining the open path beheld little King & the three old women walking whole & sound a few yards before him. more surprised than before he viewed them in silence for an instant & then concluded that they were other fairies whom little King had brought with him to this earth, he strove to satisfy himself with this conjecture but notwithstanding his endeavours he still felt an uneasy vague & by no means pleasant sensation when he looked at their little sharp faces & heard the shrill disagreeable tones of their voices (for they were now chatting away as merrily as before) for which he was unable to account.

at length they arrived at the mansion, little King knocked at the Great Gate the folding-doors rolled back and a blaze of red light burst forth illuminating the grand flight of broad sculptured steps & the dark avenue for a great distance off. a huge fire was burning in the wide hall chimney & every branch of the brass lustre bore a flame. The servants were gathered together at supper: GameKeeper sat at the head of the table, Jack Of All Trades officiated as waiter & Orderly-Man as vice president. Peels of laughter rose every instant to the lofty roof & the oaken rafters trembled, little King & his companions entered. the doors were shut again & lord Charles was left to the darkness & solitude of night which formed a wide difference to the revels he had just caught a glimpse of. after a moments thought he cleared the steps with a bound & springing along the path came to a door in the wall which he opened with a key he took from his pocket & then entered a small green plain delightfully planted with many beautiful shrubs & trees & watered by a fountain in the midst, this he presently crossed & ascending a high flight of balustraded marble steps reached a terrace that led to an arched glass door, he opened this also & a small elegantly furnished room became apparent which was his own & his brothers private apartment.

Arthur was sitting by the fire with his head resting on his hand lost in deep abstraction, the moment lord Wellesley entered he started up exclaiming "O Charles I have been listening & wishing for you a long time & now I am rejoiced at your arrival - come sit down & let us have our usual pleasant conversation before retiring to rest." Charles met his brothers welcome with equal cordiality &, flinging himself on the warm persian rug began to relate his adventures of that day, in which employment I must for the present leave him & return to little King and the 3 old women.

After Supper was over he requested leave to speak with the housekeeper & was informed by one of the maids that she had withdrawn for the night & they dared not now disturb her but that to-morrow he might procure an interview for himself & friends. this answer by no means pleased the Dames who were beginning in a loud shrill cadence to express their dissatisfaction, when Old-Man-Cockney coming in they together with the servants were driven off to-bed.

The next morning they rose with the sun & were only prevented from breaking in upon Mrs Daura Dovelike's rest by a chambermaid who met them at the door & warned them of the consequence of their intrusion namely instant dismissal without an audience. It was with difficulty they were persuaded to wait till nine-o'clock so great was their anxiety to have the affair of engagement settled, at that time Mrs Daura sent word that she was ready to receive them. On proceeding to her apartment they found her seated at breakfast in an arm chair with her feet on a cushioned foot-stool, her stiff figure was invested in an old fashioned bustling black silk gown with cap & ruff starched to the consistence of buck-ram." as kind Fortune would have it she happened this morning to be in good temper so after bidding them sit down & asking a few questions she agreed to take them before her lady the Duchess of Wellington.

When they had passed through a long corridor gallery & anti-chamber they came to her private sitting-room, it was ornamented after a most splendid but nevertheless simple & unostentatious style. The Duchess was engaged at her usual charitable employment of working for the poor.⁴ She was attired in a rich robe of dark crimson velvet almost entirely unadorned except one bright diamond which fastened the belt, the redundant tresses of her fine brown hair were confined in a silken net over which gracefully waved a single white ostrich feather, her face & figure were extremely beautiful & her large hazel eyes beamed with expression, but the principal charm about her was the gentleness & sweetness ever visible in her countenance, it seemed and it was impossible for her to storm & frown or even be angry for if any thing wrong was committed by her servants or dependants she only looked grieved & sad & not dark or lowering.

When they entered the Duke was also in the room conversing with his lady & the housekeeper on seeing him courtesied respectfully & was going away when he called her back & quitting the apartment left them to transact business without being under the embarrassment of his awe-inspiring-minister-general-& clerk-confusing presence. after a short conversation it was settled that the 3 old Dames should act for one month on trial as washer-women & laundry-maids & that if during the prescribed time they behaved well they should then be taken into permanent service at wages of 10 guineas per-annum each, when this was fixed they left her ladyships equally delighted with the mild condescension of her manner the enchanting benignity of her smiles & the unexpected success of their application.

The next day they commenced the performance of the duties of their office which they continued for some weeks to execute with equal punctuality diligence & sobriety but not without many quarrels among themselves often ending in ferocious fights where tooth nail feet & hands were employed with equal fury, in these fracas little King (who always continued with them) was observed to be exceedingly active inciting them by every means in his power to maul & mangle each other in the most horrible way. this circumstance however was not much wondered at as his constant disposition to all kinds of mischief was well known & he was considered by every member of the house of Strathfeldsay not excepting the Duke himself more as an evil brownie than a legitimate fairy.⁵

Lord Charles had not revealed to any-one the strange incident, of which he was witness that happened on the first night of their arrival, his curiosity of which he naturally possessed a considerable share strengthened. he watched them narrowly but nothing occurred further to warrant the suspicion of their being supernatural creatures. One afternoon he went alone to that part of the rivers banks whence he saw them walking on the waves, after wandering some time among the trees gathering wild roses blue-bells & other field flowers he lay down on the green turf & fixed his eyes on the blue sky peering at intervals through the thick masses of overhanging

foliage, the sounds that saluted his ear were all of a lulling soothing character only the soft murmuring of the water flowing, the distant cooing of turtle doves from the groves or the whispering of wind in the trees, by degree^ his eyes closed a pleasing sensation of secluded rest glided through him & he was gradually passing away into a profound balmy slumber when suddenly an articulate voice came up on the breeze which said "meet us at midnight in the corridor." he started up & listened, the sound had dyed off & no trace or tone of it remained in the wild woodland music breathing around.

"I am bewitched" he exclaimed aloud "those beings have certainly cast a spell over me but I will keep the asination notwithstanding for I can do so without any one being acquainted with it as Arthur is at London."

he then rose & walked home, during the remainder of the day a most unusual expression of thought appeared in his countenance & at night he retired early to his chamber, he sat pensively alone reading by a table till every noise ceased & not a voice or footstep was heard to break the dead hush reigning throughout the whole house, then the dull heavy toll of the great hall clock fell on his ear, twelve times the hammer resounded. he got up & extinguished his taper & quitted the room by a secret outlet opening to the corridor. his eyes glanced with an involuntary shudder down the long vista, all was veiled in impenetrable darkness, at length a bright light appeared moving among the pillars. he advanced onwards, it receded slowly from him but he still followed, after awhile he saw it ascending a stair which wound up the great round tower. there he bent his course till he gained a huge door where the light vanished & left him alone, the door with a harsh jawing din opened & a vast lofty chamber became visible faintly illumined by long glimmering rows of torches which cast on all sides a bloody & terrific light. It had no roof but the sky above seemed as if a star-lit & cloudy dome, a huge black canopy in the midst swayed to-& fro in the wind that rushed through the open top & underneath were set 3 Coffins each of which held a shrouded corpse. Lord Charles advanced towards them & turning aside the winding sheets perceived that they were the 3 old washerwomen, he trembled with dread & at that instant a loud laugh rang in his ears. he looked up & beheld little King and queens standing beside him, one of them gave him a hearty slap on the shoulder saying "Charley dont' be frightened they were only our enchantments."f

he opened his eyes at this salute stared around wondered & became bewildered. For Lo! he was lying in the pale moonlight on the rivers bank & no living creature near. he immediately ran with all haste to the house & when he had arrived there repeated his tale with eagerness to his father mother & brother whom he found together in the private parlour, they laughed at it of course but on inquiry it was found that the old women had been absent from Sfrathfeildsay since the morning, investigation was set on foot but no clue by which they could be traced was discovered. One Country-man said that he had observed them about noon on the moor with little king, but that he had occasion to turn away his eyes for an instant & when he looked again he saw little King & queens standing in the same place but not the smallest mark of them. this was all that could after the strictest search be gathered & they have never been seen or heard of from that time to this. Charlotte Bronte July 14 1830

CHAPTER TWO

VOLUME 4TH

It was a sweet July evening When the Marquis of Douro & lord Charles Wellesley lay stretched on the verge of a lofty precipice silently beholding the prospect around. Majestic forest trees waving above their heads formed with woven intermingled boughs a sylvan roof to the natural carpet of grass & flowers spread beneath. Far down hundreds of green oaks & sycamores clothed the rocky and almost perpendicular shelving abyss in the dark sumer verdure with which their branches were now arrayed & from the profound depth below arose the voice of a concealed torrent hid by the gathering obscurity of dusk which was there heightened because of the gulph into which the sides of the precipice sloped that lay beyond the reach of the uncertain light lingering on the horizon after sunset. No sound save that dissipated the twilight sensation of stillness with which every passing breath of wind was charged until the Marquis taking a guitar that lay by his side swept its chords till every string vibrated in unison & then played an old mournful air which sweeping over the broad landscape was answered from a great distance by the same tune.

"There listen to Marian's reply" exclaimed lord Charles.

Arthur listened attentively but the music & its echos in a little while dyed softly away. They both remained silent for some time again, their eyes were fixed on the east where a pale light spreading over the sky began to herald the moons advent, at length like a silver sheild she heaved slowly up among stars and clouds & sat like Empress of the night on a throne of blue hills which bounded the orient expanse of scenery .

"It is surely impossible for that orb of light to be a world like ours," said Arthur as the splendour of its beams shone around him.

"Not at all my dear brother" replied lord Charles laughing "if you like I'll tell you a tale concerning it while we sit idly here."

"do Charles you know I always enjoy your stories particularly when I'm melancholy as I happen to be just now. Begin love I am ready. "

"Well I will directly but first where's my ape Tringia? Tringia! Oh here he comes now Tringia sit down under that branch of underwood. there are some nuts & blackberries to amuse yourself with & you must be more quiet than a dove while I divert Arthurs attention from the inhabitant of that pretty house which you may see yonder Tringia surrounded by a garden & plantation & lo! what do I see stooping amid the flowery parterres of that garden? an object clothed all in white! it cannot be, yes it is Marion Hume! & now that I look better through this small opera-glass, she is watering the very rose- tree that Arthur gave her from the green house & planted there with his own hands kind youth that he was. yes & there is her harp standing by the bower from which a few minutes ago she played that enchanting air."

"Charles are you going to tell me this story or not" said Arthur apparently wishing to draw of his attention.

"yes I am brother" replied lord Wellesley and he began as follows.

Once upon a time there lived in Georgia upon the banks of silver Aragua which washes the feet of the mighty Elborus; an old man named Mirza Abduliah. he abode all alone in a solitary hut far from the habitations of men the nearest hamlet being twelve miles distant, his occupation was that of a woodcutter an easy business for one who lived in the heart of Georgias forests & he likewise gathered & sold the fruit of chestnut trees, accustomed from his youth to the vast solitudes of Caucasus Giant Mountains he needed not the society of human beings but loved rather to walk in the vales of young vines & lindens which smile round the borders of Aragua to gaze at the wonderous ravines rent in the stupendous sides of icy Kasibek or to view in mute astonishment the awful form of good Gara towering aloft & raising its snow-crowned head afar into the deep azure of his native skies.' 15

One evening as he returned homewards weighed down under the burden of sticks which he had gathered in a wood 3 miles distant from his hut he sat him down in a little green glen between two rocks. The sky over-head was bright cloudless & beautiful. The horizon round about was clear as liquid amber & the light which streamed from it was of the purest golden hue enriching the sumits of the coniform hills with a faint glow of orange that divested the snow of that cold deadly aspect which would ill have harmonized with the transparency of warmth that tinted every other object. The aged Mirza felt himself touched with the beauteous prospect & kneeling he turned towards Mecca said his sunset prayers to Mahomet & then thanked the one Almighty God for his goodness in creating such a profusion of fair & lovely scenes merely for ungrateful man's pleasure & recreation.

when he had finished he rose resumed his bundle of faggots & casting a last look at the glorious horizon he prepared to quit the glen, but what was his surprise on beholding a black even line drawn around the pellucid heavens like a zone." it rose slowly up coiled itself in rings & unfurled with a noise like the concentrated winds of heaven two dark dragon pinions which shadowed the west as if the obscurity of thunder clouds hung over it. For a few moments it wavered between the vault of heaven & the globe of earth, then gradually descended. Mirza shook like one palsy stricken, but how was his fear heightened when he felt himself drawn powerless towards it. he prayed, he shrieked, he called on the name of Mahomet in vain, still like iron before the magnet he continued his charmed course upward, swifter than light he fled to the sky on on for days & nights till the moon grew larger than the earth to his eyes, at length overwhelmed with dread he fell into a long swoon & when his orbs of vision were released from the bondage by which they were held fast closed & sealed he was in a land the like of which no man ever before saw. Nothing was to be seen but black mountains higher than the highest on earth vomiting forth floods of fire & clouds of smoke - nothing to be heard but the roaring of internal flames, the ground quaked constantly under him & was continually rending in every direction & from the ravines fresh streams of red burning liquid burst boiling forth & overwhelmed every thing near.

"I must die I cannot live" he exclaimed aloud while the cold sweat of terror fell in large drops from his writhing visage. "O! Mahomet O! Allah save thy servant! what horrid crime has he committed thus to die the death of an infidel?"

"Squillish squilli keriwes Nevilah" exclaimed a sharp shrill voice above him. he looked up & beheld a creature standing on the point of a rock surrounded by several others of a similar form. But how shall I describe its shape? to what shall I liken it? it was seven feet in height stood on legs that resembled branches of trees, its eyes were two holes in a square block that formed its head, its mouth

was invisible except by a pucker in the rugged skin when shut, but when open it was an oblong hole displaying 3 rows of brown teeth as sharp and slender as pins, its arms were so long that from the elbows downward they rested on the ground, it with the others cleared the rock at one leap & alighted near Mirza. they seized & bound him with long scarfs that hung on their heads & afterwards remained for about half a hour examining him closely & showing every sign of extreme astonishment. at the end of that time Mirza heard a great hissing bubbling noise. he looked up & beheld a vast volume of lava rolling impetuously towards him, they saw it likewise & catching him up in their arms fled with incredible swiftness in an opposite direction, it however followed & would presently have overtaken them if a steep rock had not come to their relief. in a moment they sprang from it to one which stood opposite and the lava when it reached the brink was precipitated with a noise like the tremendous crash & rattle of approximate thunder down the declivity where in a short time it assumed the appearance of a black mass undistinguishable from the dense gloom of the ravine where it lay.

when this was over they hastened on without halting till day began to wane. at that time they reached a narrow vale irrigated by a branch from a neighbouring river & planted by several high trees of a kind unknown on earth, one which far outdid the rest in loftiness & beauty spreading its huge branches for a vast extent around, bore among thickly clustered leaves & blossoms hundreds of strange appearances like the nests of great birds, to this the beings who still carried Mirza with them directed their steps & quickly ascending the trunk & boughs took possession of the topmost of these nests & snugly ensconced themselves there behind an intrenchment of rich purple & golden streaked fruit growing luxuriantly on one side of their circular habitation, when they had plucked & eaten themselves they offered some to Mirza. he tasted it at first warily but finding that it proved gratefully refreshing to his palate though the flavour was different from any he had ever before known he ate freely & without restraint. When the repast was concluded they all sat perfectly silent having their eyes fixed on a certain point of the sky which was azure like that which canopies our world. Mirza looked in that direction also & began mentally to repeat his evening prayers.

scarcely had he commenced when a light appeared over the hills. it slowly rose & when all was revealed Mirza saw his earth in the form of a great luminary 5 times larger than the moon seems to us. He bowed his head and thanked God in silent ejaculations, then all his companions turned away, as the earth rose & coiling themselves round in the nest presently gave Mirza notice by loud snores that sleep had closed their eyelids. Somnolous also soon asserted his empire over him & in the oblivion of a deep sleep he buried his woes for the space of one lunar night which is I believe Arthur much about the length of a terrene.

How long he continued with these strange creatures I cannot say for I never heard but his deliverance from them happened thus. One day when they were all gone down from the tree in search of fruits & had left him alone, he knelt & earnestly implored for liberty at the hands of Mahomet who it seems heard & accepted his petitions, for before he had finished he was startled by the sound of wings & ere he could look up an immense feathered & pinioned animal of marvellous form & dimensions had him safely secured in its great brazen claws, he calmly resigned himself to his fate without one shriek or struggle imagining that these judgements coming so thick & fast upon him one at another back were for some dreadful crime that his fathers had committed, the moon eagle for it was nothing else, quivered for a while over the valley & then rose perpendicularly to an immense altitude. Mirza feared that it was mounting to the sun & in that case he knew that the eternal torment of fire was certain to be his portion, again his fervid though inward prayers were sent up to the Great Prophet, the eagle waved its wing loosened the strong grasp of its talons & Mirza found himself whirling at rather an uncomfortable rate downward.

of the particulars of his descent I am ignorant as long before he arrived at a landing place sense had fled his skull. When however it returned he was reposing on the ground & two gigantic forms were bending over him. their countenances & figures were majestically beautiful shaped like those of human beings, instead of ears they had long flaps of flesh hanging gracefully down on their shoulders, their hair was soft & glossy as unspun silk in colour a pale blue arranged in artful wreaths & curls upon their heads, from their foreheads projected a long taper horn white and polished as the finest ivory & a string of gold beads was wound spirally about it. their attire was a long robe of white down, bound at the waist with a richly embroidered belt and falling thence in the softest & most elegant folds, their arms & ankles were adorned with bracelets of gold & their feet with sandals of down ornamented by silver bands & fastened with jewels, from their necks also hung several strings of precious stones & gold or silver, they were gazing at Mirza in smiling astonishment turning him over & examining him with the utmost gentleness & care & conversing to each other meantime in a strange but harmonious language.

after some time spent thus they rose & wrapping him in the leaf of a huge plant that grew near, they conveyed him towards a great plain where was a very large & magnificent tent surrounded by several meaner ones, this they entered passing through formidable ranks of armed giants between thirty & forty feet in height all of whom showed them the greatest respect, in the midst of the tent sat one who appeared to be the chief in a thoughtful attitude his right hand supported his monstrous head & his left a dagger, they advanced & unfolding the leaf placed poor little unfortunate Mirza before him. he gave an exclamation apparently of delight, snatched him up & rising hastily quitted the tent making a sign that none should follow.

For about the space of an hour he walked or rather strode on over hills plains and rivers till there appeared a valley full of tents that encompassed a palace like edifice constructed of a species of variegated marble not in the best architectural taste but from its enormous bulk inspiring an idea of sublimity & grandeur. This was the metropolis of the country where Mirza was & that building was its Kings residence, the Giant directed his course thither.

it would be needless for me to give an account of the odd ceremonies that took place on his introduction to the King which besides being tedious would make my tale even dryer than it now is Arthur. But when they were over, he showed Mirza with a joyful countenance to his majesty who leapt from his throne in a transport & on resuming his seat poured forth an energetic speech expressive of his joy. then Mirza was consigned to a golden box enriched with gems where he lay a miserable captive till next day. at that time he was taken out & food was offered to him. being extremely hungry he ate though with great loathing & disgust as he knew what animal it was the flesh of & the taste was coarse and disagreeable.

just when he had concluded his repast he heard a tremendous sound of shouting instruments & music &c. he was then placed in his box & hurried off. after many hours of marching he was again let out & found himself in the midst of a vast army of giants who were ranged at a respectful distance from an altar where he stood in the hands of a venerable old priest clothed in wide flowing garments with a snowwhite beard hanging lower than his girdle & long grey hair disheveled in the wind, a great fire burnt on the altar & as he

sprinkled perfumes thereon & anointed Mirza with fragrant oils & essences he uttered these words "here is the sacrifice which thou didst demand O Mountain! here are our warriors assembled to do thee homage, accept our offering & spare us!" By these words Mirza knew his doom for though spoken in a strange tongue they were supernaturally understood by him. he trembled & quaked with horror as the idea of being burnt alive flashed through his mind but no shriek or supplication burst from his whitened lips and after some inward strife he resigned himself to his inevitable fate hoping that the joys of Paradise would be his subsequent reward. The Priest now poured the last libation over his devoted head and bathed him in the blood of a newly slain beast & more fuel was added to the fire whose flames were already ascending with intense fierceness & heat. Mirza was on the point of being dropped headlong in when a cry of horror broke from those around, the Priest withheld his arm & looked up. a huge black mountain appeared in the sky wavering over their heads & slowly descending on them, suddenly a flood of fire burst from the summit & a terrible voice was heard to say "Have ye O wretches, provided the offering?" "We have" they all exclaimed in an agony of dread, with a dull rumbling sound it went up again while they watched it in breathless silence while every trace vanished from the heavens.

The Priest then turned to Mirza and said "Creature whoever thou may'st be thou art doomed to die for our safety. we for a length of time have been tormented by that vision which thou sawst. it threatened to destroy us if a being like thee was not procured to appease it by death, At length some Good Spirit has placed thee in our power, thou wert found by the daughters of our chief warrior asleep & defenceless in a field. they brought thee to their father & by him thou wast delivered to our King, hitherto thou hast behaved with becoming resignation, let not thy heart fail thee in the hour of death -"

with these words Mirza was committed to the flames & the tortures he endured were hard and indescribable, for as the fire seized his feet & legs he felt all the sinews crack the calcined bones started through his blackened cindery flesh; by degrees his extremities crumbled to ashes & he fell prostrate amid their ruins, a short time now sufficed to extinguish his insupportable agony. the rising smoke presently suffocated him & he died amid shouts & cries of gladness from his sacrificers.

the remnant of my parched tale is clad in a veil of mystery. This same Mirza who suffered the extreme rigour of the law among those Giants was I know not how long subsequent to that event, wakened from his sleep of death by a shake on the shoulder which brought life again into him. he looked about & discovered that he was standing upright against the door cheek of his hut with a bundle of faggots lying before him. his surprise & joy I will not attempt to depict but on examining his hands and feet he found that they were all marked with long seams & scars of burning, this staggered him a little but after some consideration he concluded that it was all the machinations of those evil spirits who haunt the Caucasian range, for my part I do not agree with him but think that these circumstances I have related really occurred. Mirza never knew whether the Giants were inhabitants of the sun moon stars or earth. I believe the latter.

"Well my sons what witch or wizard-craft is going on between you that you have need to do it under the midnight (or thereabouts) moon & sky? come home my young scape-graces," exclaimed a voice close behind them, they started to their feet & saw their father standing near.

"I'll come directly" replied lord Wellesley. "Tringia Tringia where are you?"

Tringia sprang from under his branch of brushwood & in a short time was seated in softer & warmer quarters with Trill Philomel & Pol on the rug of the private parlour before a warm blazing fire.

C Bronte

THE GREEN DWARF

PREFACE

I am informed that the world is beginning to express in low, discontented grumblings its surprise at my long, profound, & (I must say) very ominous silence. What says the reading public as she stands in the market place with gray cap & ragged petticoat the exact image of a modern blue "What is the matter with lord Charles?" "is he expi- cated by the literary captains lash? have his good genius & his scribbling mania forsaken him both at once?" "Rides he now on Man-back through the mountains of the moon or mournful thought lies he helpless on a sick-bed of pain?"

the last conjecture I am sorry to say is or rather was true. I have been sick, most sick, I have suffered dreadful indescribable tortures arising chiefly from the terrible remedies which were made use of to effect my restoration.' One of these was boiling alive in what was called a hot-bath, another roasting before a slow fire, & a third a most rigid system of starvation, for proof of these assertions apply to Mrs Cook, back of Waterloo Palace situated in the suburbs of Verdopolis. How I managed to survive such a mode of treatment, or what the strength of my victorious constitution must be wiser men than I am would fail in explaining.

Certain it is however that I did at length get better or to speak more elegantly become convalescent but long after my cadaverous cheek had begun to reassume a little of its wonted freshness I was kept penned up in a corner of the House-keepers parlour, forbid the use of pen, ink & paper, prohibited setting foot into the open air & dieted on rice-gruel, sago, snail soup panado, stewed cock-chaffers, milk-broth & roasted mice. I will not say what was my delight when first Mrs Cook deigned to inform me about two o'clock on a fine summer afternoon that as it was a mild warm day I might take a short walk out if I pleased, ten minutes sufficed for arraying my person in a new suit of very handsome clothes & washing the accumulated dirt of seven diurnal revolutions of the earth from my face & hands.

as soon as these necessary operations were performed I sallied out in plumed hat & cavalier mantle. Never before had I been fully sensible of the delights of liberty, the suffocating atmosphere which filled the hot, flinty street was to me as delicious as the dew-cooled & balm- breathing air of the freshest twilight in the wildest solitude, there was not a single tree to throw its sheltering branches between me & that fiery sun but I felt no want of such a screen as with slow but not faltering step I crept along in the shadow of shops and houses. At a sudden turn the flowing ever-cool sea burst unexpectedly on me. I felt like those poor wretches do who are victims to the disease called a calenture. the green waves looked like wide-spread plains covered with foam - white flowers & tender spring grass & the thickly clustered masts of vessels my excited fancy transformed into groves of tall, graceful trees, while the smaller craft took the form of cattle reposing in their shade. I passed on with something of that springing step which is natural to me, but soon my feeble knees began to totter under the frame which they should have supported, unable to go further without rest I looked round for some place where I might sit down till my strength should be un peu retabli. I was in that ancient & dilapidated court, called (pompously enough) Quaxmina Square, where Bud, Gifford, Love-dust, & about twenty other cracked old antiquarians reside. I determined to take refuge in the house of the first mentioned as well because he is my most intimate friend as because it is in the best condition.

Buds' mansion is indeed far from being either incommodious or unseemly, the outside is venerable & has been very judiciously repaired by modern masons (a step by the bye which brought down the censure of almost all his neighbours) & the inside is well & comfortably furnished. I knocked at the door, it was opened by an old footman with a reverend grey head. on asking if his master were at home he showed me upstairs into a small but handsome room. Here I found Bud seated at a table surrounded by torn parchments & rubbish & descanting copiously on some rusty knee-buckles which he held in his hand to the Marquis of Douro & another puppy who very politely were standing before him with their backs to the fire.

"What's been to do with my darling?" said the kind old gentleman as I entered "what's made it look so pale & sickly, I hope not chagrin at Trees superannuated drivell"

"Bless us" said Arthur before I could speak a word "What a little chalky spoon he looks! the whipping I bestowed on him has stuck to his small body right well. hey Charley any soreness yet?"

"Fratricide" said I "how dare you speak thus lightly to your half murdered brother, how dare you demand whether the tortures you have inflicted continue yet to writhe his agonized frame?"

he answered this appeal with a laugh intended I have no doubt to display his white teeth & a sneer designed to set off his keen wit & at the same instant he gently touched his riding-wand.

"Nay my lord" said Bud who noticed this significant manoeuvre, "let us have no more of such rough play - you'll kill the lad in earnest if you don't mind"

"I'm not going to meddle with him yet" said he "he's not at present in a condition to show game but let him offend me again as he has done & I'll hardly leave a strip of skin on his carcase"

What brutal threats he would have uttered besides I know not but at this moment he was interrupted by the entrance of dinner.

"My lord & Colonel Morton" said Bud "I hope you'll stay & take a bit of dinner with me, if you don't think my plain fare too coarse for your dainty palates"

"On my honour Captain" replied Arthur "your bachelor's meal looks very nice & I should really feel tempted to partake of it had it been more than two hours since I breakfasted, last night or rather this morning I went to bed at six & so it was twelve before I rose, therefore dining you know is out of the question till seven or eight o'clock in the evening"

Morton excused himself on some similar pretext & shortly after both the gentlemen much to my satisfaction took their leave.

"Now Charley" said my friend when they were gone "you'll give me your company I know, so sit down on that easy chair opposite to me & let's have a regular two-handed crack."

I gladly accepted his kind invitation because I knew that if I returned home Mrs Cook would allow me nothing for dinner but a basin-full of some filthy vermined slop. During our meal few words were spoken for Bud hates chatter at feeding time & I was too

busily engaged in discussing the most savoury plateful of food I had eaten for the last month & more to bestow a thought on anything of less importance, however when the table was cleared & the dessert brought in, Bud wheeled the round table nearer the open window poured out a glass of sack seated himself in his cushioned arm-chair & then said in that quiet satisfactory tone which men use when they are perfectly comfortable :

“What shall we talk about Charley.”

“anything you like” I replied .

“Anything?” said he “why that means just nothing, but what would you like?”

“Dear Bud” was my answer “since you have been kind enough to leave the choice of a topic to me there is nothing I should enjoy so much as one of your delightful tales if you would but favour me this once I shall consider myself eternally obliged to you.”

Of course Bud according to the universal fashion of all story-tellers refused at first but after a world of flattery, coaxing & intreating he at length complied with my request & related the following incidents which I now present to the reader not exactly in the original form of words in which I heard it but strictly preserving the sense & facts.

July 10th -33. C. Wellesley

CHAPTER THE FIRST

Twenty years since or thereabouts there stood in what is now the middle of Verdopolis but which was then the extremity a huge irregular building called the Genii's Inn. it contained more than five hundred appartments all comfortably & some splendidly fitted up for the accommodation of travellers who were entertained in this vast hostelry free of expense, it became in consequence of this generous regulation the almost exclusive resort of way-farers of every nation who in spite of the equivocal character of the host & hostesses being the four chief Genii, Talli, Brani, Emi, & Anni & the despicable villany of the waiters & other attendants which noble offices were filled by subordinate spirits of the same species continually flocked thither in prodigious multitudes; the sound of their hurrying footsteps, the voice of rude revel, & the hum of business has ceased now among the ruined arches, the damp mouldy vaults, the dark halls & the desolate chambers of this once mighty edifice which was destroyed in the great rebellion, & now stands silent, & lonely in the heart of Great Verdopolis. But our business is with the past, not the present day, therefore let us leave moping to the owls & look on the bright side of matters; On the evening of the fourth of June 1814 it offered rather a different appearance, there had been during that day a greater influx of guests than usual - which circumstance was owing to a Grand fete to be held on the morrow, the great hall looked like a motley masquerade in one part was seated cross legged on the pavement a group of Turkish merchants who in those days used to trade largely with the shopkeepers & citizens of Verdopolis in spices, shawls, silks, muslins, jewellery, perfumes, & other articles of oriental luxury, these sat composedly smoking their long pipes & drinking choice sherbet & reclining against the cushions which had been provided for their accommodation. Near them a few dark sunburnt Spaniards strutted with the gravely proud air of a peacock, which bird according to the received opinion dares not look downwards lest his feet should break the self complacent spell which enchants him. Not far from these lords of creation sat a company of round, rosy-faced, curly-pated, straight- legged one-shoed beings, from Stumps'es Island, where that now nearly obsolete race of existences then flourished like the green bay tree, more than a dozen Genii were employed in furnishing them with melons & rice pudding for which they roared out incessantly.

at the opposite extremity of the hall five or six sallow, bilious Englishmen were conversing over a cup of green-tea. behind them a band of withered monsieurs sat presenting each other with fine white bread peculiarly rich elegant prussian butter," perfumed snuff brown sugar & calico. at no great distance from these half withered apes, within the great carved screen that surrounded a huge blazing fire two gentlemen had established themselves before a table on which smoked a tempting dish of beefsteaks with the due accompaniments of onions ketchup & cayenne flanked by a large silver vessel of prime old Canary & a corresponding tankard of spiced ale.

One of the personages whose good fortune it was to be the devourer of such choice cheer was a middle-aged man who might perhaps have numbered his fifty-fifth year, his rusty black habiliments, powdered wig & furrowed brow spoke at once the scholar & the despiser of external decorations; the other presented a remarkable contrast to his companion, he was in the prime of life being apparently not more than six or seven & twenty years of age. a head of light brown hair arranged in careless yet tasteful curls well became the pleasing though not strictly regular features of his very handsome countenance to which a bright & bold blue eye added all the charms of expression. His form evincing both strength & symmetry was set of to the best advantage by a military costume while his erect bearing & graceful address gave additional testimony to the nature of his profession.

"this young soldier" said Bud with a kindling eye " was myself, you may laugh Charlev;" for I could not forbear a smile on contrasting the dignified corporation of my now somewhat elderly fat friend with the description he had just given of his former appearance "you may laugh but I was once as gallant a youth as ever wore a soldiers sword. alack a day time troubles Good Liquour & good-living change a man sorely"

But the reader will ask who was the other gentleman mentioned above, he was John Gilford then the bosom friend of Ensign Bud as he is now of Captain Bud. There was a profound silence so long as their savoury meal continued but when the last mouthful of beef, the last shred of onion the last grain of cayenne & the last drop of ketchup had disappeared, Gilford laid down his knife & fork, uttered a deep sigh & opening his oracular jaws said "Well Bud I suppose the fools whom we see here gathered together from all the winds of heaven are come to our Babylonian City for the unworthy purpose of beholding the gauds & vanities of tomorrow."

"Doubtless" replied the other "And I sincerely hope that you Sir also will not disdain to honnour their exhibition with your presence."

"I!" almost yelled the senior gentleman, "I go & see the running of chariots, the racing & prancing of horses, the goring of wild beasts, the silly craft of archery & the brutal sport of the wrestlers! art thou mad or are thy brains troubled with the good wine & nutmeg ale" here the speaker filled his glass with the latter generous liquid.

"I am neither one nor t'other Gilford" answered Bud, "but I'll venture to say that forasmuch as you despise those gauds & vanities as you call them, many a better man than you is longing for to-morrow on their account"

"Ah! & I suppose thou art among the number of those arrant fools"

"Aye truly said! I see no shame in the avowal"

"Don't you indeed, Oh Bud, Bud I sometimes hope that you are beginning to be sensible of the folly of these pursuits. I sometimes dare to imagine that you will one day be found a member of that chosen band who despising the weak frivolities of this our degenerate age, turn studiously to the contemplation of the past who value as some men do gold & jewels every remnant however small however apparently trivial which offers a memento of vanished generations."

"Goodness Gifford! how you talk! I like well enough to see Melchizedecs cup for the sacramental wine, the tethers by which Abraham's camels were fastened in their pasture-grounds or even the thigh bone & shoulder-blade of one of our own worthy old Giants even when these latter articles turn out to be the remains of a dead elephant. (Ah Giff touched ye there I see) but as to making such matters the serious business of my life, why hang me if I think I shall turn to that trade before a round dozen of years have trotted

merrily over my head."

"you speak like one of the foolish people" replied Giff solemnly "but still I glean a handful of comfort from your last words. at some future period you will give serious attention to the grand purpose for which we were all brought into the world?"

"May be aye & may be nay but whether I do or not my cherub there, Stingo, seems as if he would have no objection to turn both antiquarian & lawyer already."

"Ha! what is it that same sweet boy whom I saw yesterday at your house whose young features express a promising solemnity far beyond his tender years?"

"the same and a sour squalling ill-tempered brat it is" "My dear friend," said Gifford with great earnestness "take care that you do not check the unfolding of that hopeful flower, mind my words, he will be an honour to his country & here give him these toys (taking a number of roundish stones from his pocket) & tell him I have no doubt they were used as marbles by the children of the ancient Britons, doubtless he will know how to value them accordingly."

"to be sure he will, but my dear friend, the next time you make Stingo a present let it be some slight treatise on the law. he is continually hunting in my library for books of that nature & complains that he can scarcely find one of the sort he wants."

"The angel!" exclaimed Gifford in ecstasy "the moment I get home I will send him a complete edition of my compendium of the laws, he shall not long pine in the agonies of inanition."

"You are very kind" said Bud "but now let us change the subject. I understand that Bravey is to occupy the president's throne tomorrow. I wonder who will be the rewarder of the victors."

"it is not often that I remember the idle chat which passes in my presence but I heard this morning that Lady Emily Charlesworth is to be honoured with that dignity."

"Is she? that's well! they could not possibly have made a better choice - why her beauty alone will give eclat to the whole routine of tomorrows proceedings^ now tell me honestly Giff do you not think Lady Emily the most beautiful of earthly creatures?"

"She's well enough favoured" replied Gifford "that is her garments ever become her person but for her mind I fear it is a waste, uncultivated field which where it is not wholly barren presents a rank crop of the weeds of frivolity"

"Prejudiced old prig!" said I angrily "would you have a spiritual essence of Divinity like that to wither her roses by studying rotten scrolls & bending over grub-devoured law-books?"

"Not precisely so but I would have her to cultivate the faculties with which Nature hath endowed her by a diligent perusal of abridged treatises on the subjects you mention carefully digested by some able & judicious man. I myself when her uncle appointed me her tutor in the more solid & useful branches of a polite education composed a small work of ten quarto volumes on the antiquities of England, interspersed with explanatory notes & having an appendix of one thick volume quarto, if I could have got her to read this little work carefully & attentively through it might have given her some insight into the noble science of which I am an unworthy eulogist but while by a strange perversion of intellect she listened to openly & followed obediently the instructions of those trivial beings who taught her the empty accomplishments of music, dancing, drawing, modern languages, &c. &c., while she even gave some occasional odd moments to the formation of flowers & other cunning devices on the borders of silken or fine linen raiment I alone vainly attempted to lure her on in the honourable paths of Wisdom sometimes by honeyed words of enticement sometimes by thorny threats of correction. at one time she laughed at another wept & occasionally (to my shame be it spoken) bribed me by delusive blandishments to criminal acquiescence in her shameful neglect of all that is profitable to be understood by either man or womankind"

"Bravo Giff" said Bud laughing "I wish she had boxed your ears whenever you bothered her on such subjects! by the by have you heard that your fair quondam pupil is about to be married to Colonel Percy?"

"I have not but I do not doubt the rumour: that's the way of all women. they think of nothing but being married while Learning is as dust in the balance."

"Who & what is Colonel Percy?" said a voice close behind. Bud turned hastily round to see who the strange interrogator might be. he started as his eyes met the apparition of a tall slender form dimly seen by the decaying embers which now shone fitfully on the hearth.

"friend" said he stirring up the fire to obtain a more perfect view of the stranger, "tell me first who & what you are who ask such abrupt questions about other people."

"I" replied he "am a volunteer in the cause of good government & suppressor of rebels & ere long I hope to be able to call myself a brother in arms with you it being my intention shortly to enlist under the Duke's standard"

as the unknown gave this explanation a bundle of brushwood which had been thrown on the half extinguished fire kindling to a bright blaze revealed his person more clearly than the darkening twilight had hitherto permitted it to be seen, he appeared to be full six feet high. his figure naturally formed on a model of the most perfect elegance derived additional grace from the picturesque though rather singular costume in which he was attired consisting of a green vest & tunic reaching a little below the knee laced buskins, a large dark robe or mantle which hung over one shoulder in ample folds & was partially confined by the broad belt which encircled his waist & a green bonnet surmounted by a high plume of black feathers, a bow & quiver hung on his back, two knives whose hafts sparkled with jewellery were stuck in his girdle & a tall spear of glittering steel which he held in one hand served him for a kind of support as he stood, the martial majesty of this imposing stranger's form & dress harmonized well with the manly though youthful beauty of his countenance whose finely chiselled features & full bright eyes shaded by clusters of short brown curls shone with an expression of mingled pride & frankness which awed the spectator while it won his unqualified admiration."

"Upon my word friend" said I struck with the young soldier's handsome exterior "if I were the Duke I should be well pleased with such a recruit as you promise to be. pray may I inquire of what country you are a native for both your garb & accent are somewhat foreign?"

"you forget" replied the stranger smiling "that you are my debtor for a reply : my first question remains yet unanswered"

"Ah true" said Bud "you asked me I think who Colonel Percy might be?"

"I did, & it would gratify me much to receive some information respecting him."

"He is the nephew & apparent heir of the rich old Duke of Beaufort"

"Indeed! how long has he paid his addresses to lady Emily Charlesworth?"

"For nearly a year."

"When are they to be married?"

"Shortly I believe"

"Is he handsome?"

"Yes nearly as much so as you & into the bargain his manners are those of an accomplished soldier & gentleman but in spite of all this he is a finished scoundrel, a haughty gambling drinking unconscionable blackguard"

"Why do you speak so warmly against him?"

"Because I know him well. I am his inferior officer & have daily opportunities of observing his vices."

"Is lady Emily acquainted with his real character?"

"Perhaps not altogether but if she were I do not think she would love him less, ladies look more to external than internal qualifications in their husbands elect."

"Do they often appear in public together?"

"I believe not, lady Emily confines herself very much to private life. she is said not to like display"

"Do you know anything of her disposition or temper? is it good or bad, close or candid?"

"I'm sure I can't tell you but there is a gentleman here who will satisfy your curiosity on that point. he was her tutor & should know all about it. Pray Gifford favour us with your opinion."

Gifford hearing himself thus appealed to emerged from the dark corner which had hitherto nearly concealed him from view, the stranger started on seeing him & attempted to muffle his face with one end of the large mantle in which he was envelopped as if for the purpose of avoiding a recognition. But the worthy antiquary at no time sharp-sighted & whose brains at this particular juncture happened to be somewhat muddled by the draughts of spiced ale which he had just been administering to himself with no sparing hand, regarded him with a vacant stare of wonder as he drawled out "What's your business with me Bud?"

"I merely wished to know if you could inform this gentleman what sort of temper lady Charlesworth had"

"What sort of a temper! why I don't know, much the same as other girls of her age have & that's a very bad one. f the stranger smiled gave a significant shrug of the shoulder which seemed to say there's not much to be had from this quater & bowing politely to the corner walked away to a distant part of the hall. When he was gone the two friends sat silent for some time but Bud's attention was soon attracted by the sound of a voice apparently employed in reading or recitation proceeding from the group of Frenchmen who were seated at no great distance, he walked towards them, the speaker was a little dapper man dressed in brown coat & waistcoat & cream? colour continuations." he was uttering the following words" with abundance of action & grimace as Bud came up.

"Well as I was saying the Emperor got into bed. "Cheveleure" says he to his valet "let down those window curtains & shut that casement before you leave the room." Cheveleure did as he was told & then taking up his candlestick departed. In a few minutes the Emperor felt his pillow becoming rather hard & he got up to shake it. as he did so, a slight rustling noise was heard near the bed-head, his majesty listened but all was silent so he lay down again, scarcely had he settled into a peaceful attitude of repose when he was disturbed by a sensation of thirst, lifting himself on his elbow he took a glass of lemonade from the small stand which was placed beside him. he refreshed himself by a deep draught, as he returned the goblet to its station a deep groan burst from a kind of closet in one corner of the apartment. "Who's there?" cried the Emperor seizing his pistols "Speak or I'll blow your brains out." this threat produced no other effect than a short sharp laugh & a dead silence followed, the Emperor started from his couch & hastily throwing on a robe de chambre which hung over the back of a chair stepped courageously to the haunted closet, as he opened the door something rustled, he sprang forward sword in hand, no soul or even substance appeared & the rustling it was evident had proceeded from the falling of a cloak which had been suspended by a peg from the door, half ashamed of himself he returned to bed. just as he was about once more to close his eyes the light of the three wax tapers which burnt in a silver branch over the mantle peice was suddenly darkened, he looked up. a black opaque shadow obscured it. sweating with terror the Emperor put out his hand to seize the bell-rope but some invisible being snatched it rudely from his grasp & at the same instant the ominous shade vanished. "Pooh" exclaimed Napoleon "it was but an ocular delusion."

"Was it?" whispered a hollow voice in deep mysterious tones, close to his ear "Was it a delusion Emperor of France, no all thou hast heard & seen is sad forwarning reality. Rise lifter of the Eagle Standard, Awake swayer of the lily sceptre, follow me Napoleon & thou shalt see more." as the voice ceased, a form dawned on his astonished sight, it was that of a tall thin man dressed in a blue surtout edged with gold lace, it wore a black cravat very tightly twisted round its neck & confined by two little sticks placed behind each ear. the countenance was livid, the tongue protruded from between the teeth & the eyes all glazed & bloodshot starting with frightful prominence from their sockets. "Mon Dieu", exclaimed the Emperor "what do I see? dreadful? spectre whence comest thou?" the apparition spoke not but gliding forward beckoned Napoleon with uplifted finger to follow, controlled by a mysterious influence which entirely deprived him of the capability of either thinking or acting for himself he obeyed in silence, the solid wall of the apartment fell open as they approached & when both had passed through, it closed behind them with a noise like thunder, they would now have been in total darkness had it not been for a dim blue light which lit the air round? the ghost & revealed the damp walls of a long vaulted passage, down this they proceeded with mute rapidity, ere long a cool refreshing breeze which rushed wailing up the vault & caused the Emperor to wrap his loose night dress closer round announced their approach to the open air. this they soon reached & Napoleon found himself in one of the principal streets of Paris. "Worthy Spirit" said he shivering in the chill air "permit me to return & put on some additional clothing I will be with you again presently" "Forward" replied his companion sternly, he felt compelled in spite of the rising indignation which almost choked him to obey, on they went through the deserted streets till they arrived at a lofty house built on the banks of the Seine, here the Spectre stopped, the gates rolled back to receive them & they entered a large marble hall which was partly concealed by a curtain drawn across through the half transparent folds of which a bright light might be seen burning with dazzling lustre. A row of fine female figures richly attired stood before this screen; each wore on their heads garlands of the most beautiful flowers but their faces were concealed by ghastly masks representing Death's heads. "What is all this mummerly," cried the Emperor making an effort to shake off the mental shackles by which he was unwillingly restrained "where am I & why have I been

brought here.” “Silence” said the guide lolling out still further his black & bloody tongue “Silence if thou wouldst escape instant death.” the Emperor would have replied his natural courage overcoming the temporary awe to which he had at first been subjected, but just then a strain of wild supernatural music swelled behind the huge curtain which waved to & fro & belled slowly out as if agitated by some internal commotion or battle of warring winds, at the same moment an overpowering mixture of the scents of mortal corruption blent with the richest eastern odours stole through the haunted hall. A murmur of many voices was now heard at a distance. something grasped his arm roughly from behind, he turned hastily round, his eyes met the well-known countenance of Maria Louisa. “What are you in this infernal place too?” says he “What has brought you here?” “Will your majesty permit me to ask the same question of yourself?” returned the Empress smiling, he made no reply — astonishment prevented him. no curtain now intervened between him & the light. it had been removed as if by magic & a splendid chandelier appeared suspended over his head, throngs of ladies richly dressed but without death’s head masks stood round & a due proportion of gay cavaliers was mingled with them, music was still sounding but it was now seen to proceed from a band of mortal musicians stationed in an orchestra near at hand, the air was yet redolent of incense but it was incense unblended with stench. “Bon Dieu” cried the Emperor “how is all this come about, where in the world is Piche?” “Piche?” replied the Empress “what does your majesty mean? had you not better leave the apartment & retire to rest?” “leave the apartment! why, where am I?” “in my private drawing-room surrounded by a few particular persons of the court whom I had invited this evening to a ball . you entered a few minutes since in your night dress with your eyes fixed & wide open. I suppose from the astonishment you now testify that you were walking in your sleep.” the Emperor immediately fell into a fit of the catalepsy in which he continued during the whole of that night & the greater part of next day.”

As the little man finished his story a person dressed in blue & gold uniform bustled through the surrounding crowd of listeners & touching the narrator with a sort of official staff which he carried in his hand said “He arrests him in the name of the Emperor.”

“what for?” asked the little man.

“what for!” reiterated a voice at the other end of the hall “he’ll let him know what for. What’s the meaning of that scandalous anecdote he should like to know, to the Bastille with him instantly incessantly,”

all eyes were turned towards the deliverer of this peremptory mandate, & lo! the identical Emperor himself in his accustomed green surcoat and violet coloured pantaloons stood surrounded by about twenty gens d’armes engaged in continued and uninterrupted snuff-taking: every one’s attention was now attracted towards le grand Napoleon and le pauvre petit conteur de sirnettes? was hurried off to the Bastille without further notice or compassion, as it was now getting very late & the Inn was all bustle & confusion in consequence of the excitement occasioned among the guests by the arrival of the illustrious visitor. Bud & Gifford to whom the Emperor was no novelty, thought proper to take their departure. They walked down the first street together & then as their roads lay in opposite directions separated for the night.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

A bright & balmy summer's morning ushered in the first celebration of the African Olympic Games.* At an early hour (as the newspapers say) the amphitheatre was crowded almost to suffocation in every part except the open area a square mile in magnitude allotted to the combatants & those Private seats which were reserved for the accommodation of the nobility & other persons of distinction.

the scene of the Games was not exactly then what it is now. the houses which surround it on three sides were at that time but newly built; some indeed were but half finished & a few had only the foundations dug. the lofty hill called Fredericks Crag which completes the circle on the fourth side & whose summit above the seats is at the present day covered with Gardens & splendid private dwellings was then a sombre forest whose ancient echos were as yet unviolated by the sound of the woodcutter's axe. the stumps of a few recently felled trees likewise appeared in the midst of the newly cleared arena but it is a question in my opinion whether by the vast improvements which have since taken place in the neighbourhood of the amphitheatre the scene has not lost in picturesque variety what it has gained in grandeur & perfect finish. On that memorable morning the tall magnificent trees waving their still dewy arms now towards the blue sky which seemed not far above them & now over the heads of as many peoples, nations,

tongues & kindreds as Nebuchadzezzar's decree called together on the plains of Dura" Hung into the prospect a woodland wildness & sylvan sublimity which in my opinion would be a more potent & higher charm than any of the artificial forms of beauty our great city has created in their stead are capable of infusing.

After an hour of anxious expectation the distant sound of musical instruments announced the approach of the principal personages. Bravey advanced slowly & majestically followed by a brilliant train of nobles. his tall & imposing person was set off to the best advantage by an ample robe of purple splendidly wrought with gold, he took his seat on the president's throne amidst bursts of universal applause, after him came Lady Emily Charlesworth his niece. the flutes & softer instruments of the musicians breathed a dulcet welcome as the fair Re-warder of victors with a graceful rather than stately tread moved towards her decorated seat, her form was exquisitely elegant though not above the middle size & as she lifted her long white veil to acknowledge the thunderous applause of the multitude a countenance was revealed such as painters & poets love to imagine but which is seldom seen in actual life, the features were soft and delicate the general complexion transparently fair but tinged on the cheeks & lips with a clear healthy crimson hue which gave an idea of vigour & healthy freshness, her eyes dark, bright & full of animation flashed from under their long lashes & finely pencilled brows an arch, laughing, playful light, which though it might not perhaps have suited well in a heroine of romance yet added to her countenance a most fascinating though indescribable charm. At first as she removed her veil & met the gaze of more than a million admiring eyes a blush mantled on her beautiful cheeks. She bowed timidly though gracefully & her white hand trembled with agitation as she waved it in reply to their greeting, but she soon regained her composure, the scene before her awoke feelings of a higher nature in her susceptible mind.

the blue & silent sky, the wild dark forest & the broad glimpse of mountainous country opening far beyond, tinged by the violet hues of distance contrasted with the mighty assemblage of living & moving beings, the Great city & the boundless sea beyond. these circumstances together with the sound of the music which now in subdued &

solemn but most inspiring tones accompanied the heralds as they summoned the charioteers who were to contest the first prize to approach, could not but kindle in every bosom admiration for the simple sublimity of Nature & the commanding magnificence of Art.

Three chariots now drew up round the Starting Post. In the first sat a little man with a head of fiery red hair & a pair of keen malicious black eyes which kept squinting round the arena & regarding every one on whom their distorted glances chanced to fall with a kind of low blackguard expression which accorded well with the rest of his appearance & equipments.' His chariot was rather out of character when compared with the gorgeousness of all surrounding objects being in fact neither more nor less than a common spring cart drawn by four of those long eared & proverbially obstinate animals called asses whom he alternately held in check by means of a rough straw rope bridle or goaded forward with the assistance of a black thorn staff pointed at one end. the occupier of the second chariot was a fashionable dandified gentleman in pink silk jacket & white pantaloons whose whole attention seemed absorbed by the management of his four handsome bay chargers, his name was Major Hawkins at that time a celebrated Hero of the Turf & ring, but it was the third & last charioteer who excited the most general attention. He was a tall & very handsome young man whose symmetrical form appeared to the utmost advantage as he stood upright on his small light car gallantly reining in the proud prancing steeds that seemed by their loud snorting & the haughty elevation of their stately arched necks to be conscious of their master's superiority over the other combatants, the countenance of this gentleman was as I have said handsome, his features were regularly formed & his forehead was lofty, though not very open, but there was in the expression of his blue & sparkling but sinister eyes & of the smile that ever played round his deceitful looking mouth a spirit of deep restless villainy which warned the penetrating observer that all was not as fair within as without, while his pallid cheek & somewhat haggard air bespoke at once the profligate the gambler & perhaps the Drunkard. Such is the description as well as my poor pen can express it of Colonel the Honourable Alexander Augustus Percy.

All being now ready the signal for starting broke from a silver trumpet stationed near the President's throne, the three chariots shot off bravely with the swiftness of arrows running nearly abreast of each other till near the middle of the course, When to the surprise of all the little red-headed gentleman with the asses got ahead of the other two & by dint of a most vigorous system of pricking reached the Gaol two minutes before them. No pen or pencil can give an adequate picture of the deep subdued rage which glowed in Colonel Percy's eye & covered his pale cheek & forehead with a dark red flush of anger, he threw one glance of concentrated malignity on the fortunate winner & then throwing the reins to a groom who stood near in attendance leapt from his chariot & mingled with the crowd.

it is not my intention to give a full & detailed account of all that took place on this memorable day. I shall merely glance at the transactions which followed & then proceed to topics more nearly connected with my tale.

the sports of Horse-racing, wrestling, & bull-fighting followed in all of which Colonel Percy was engaged, in the first his favourite

horse Tornado carried away the gold chaplet from ten of the most renowned steeds in Verdopolis; in the second he himself successively overcame five powerful antagonists, & in the third when every one else turned in dismay from a mighty red bull of the Byson breed after it had ripped up ten horses & gored their riders to death he mounted Tornado & with a red crest waving from his Hussars cap & a scarlet cloak depending from his shoulders rode courageously into the middle of the amphitheatre, the Combat for a long time was dubious but at length by a well aimed stroke his lance drank the huge monster's heart's blood & it fell bellowing to the earth which was crimsoned with its gore.

The last prize now remained to be tried for, it was that of Archery, here too Colonel Percy presented himself as a competitor, the mark was a tall white wand set at the distance of sixty feet, twenty noble members of the Archer's Association all accounted Marksmen of the first order contended for this prize, but the arrows of all fell either more or less wide of the mark. It now became Colonel Percy's turn, he advanced & discharged a carefully directed arrow which though it came much nearer than any of the rest failed also in hitting the appointed mark. The Heralds now according to an established form demanded if there were any one amongst the spectators who would undertake to shame the unsuccessful archers. A dead silence followed this demand for none thought themselves qualified to attempt an enterprise apparently so impracticable & the President proceeded to adjudge the prize to him whose arrow had come nearest in default of a better.

he had scarcely uttered the words when a young man of a form as noble & majestic as that which the ancients attributed to Appollo advanced from the crowd, his dress & appearance I have described before for it was that identical stranger who on the previous night had arrived at the Genii's Inn but now instead of the green bonnet & plume which he then wore a steel helmet covered his head & the visor being closed entirely concealed his features.'

"My Lord" said he approaching the President's throne, "will you permit me the honour of discharging a single arrow before you & the fair rewarder of Victors? I delayed my request till now that I might not deprive Colonel Percy of the prize which justly falls to his lot."

Bravey readily gave his consent & the stranger stationing himself twenty feet further off than the appointed distance, unslung the bow & quiver which hung at his shoulder chose an arrow tightened his string & ere another second had elapsed the splintering of the white wand proclaimed his triumph and skill. A loud thundering cheer rose from the thousands gazing round & when it had subsided Bravey rising from his seat declared that he rescinded his former decision regarding the prize & awarded it to the successful stranger. All eyes now turned to Colonel Percy, but no symptom of mortification or anger appeared either in his countenance or behaviour, on the contrary he turned immediately to the Unknown & with the most friendly cordiality of manner congratulated him on his good fortune. His civilities were received however with a cold & haughty courtesy which told that they were unwelcome as effectually as the most prompt & decided rejection of them could have done. Still the Colonel did not seem piqued but continued to converse with his unsocial conqueror in the free & unembarrassed strain which was natural to him as a man of the world.

"Upon my word" observed Ensign Bud who with his friend Gifford (for he had persuaded the old Gentleman to accompany him to see the Games) was seated in the front row of seats "Upon my word I believe the Colonel has some fiendish scheme of Revenge in his mind or he would never put on that smooth quiet face"

"Doubtless" returned Gifford "but who is that fantastically arrayed foreigner? methinks I have heard a voice like his before though where or when I cannot for my life call to mind".

Bud was about to reply but he was prevented by the loud summons of the heralds & the sudden rich swell of music which burst grandly forth as the victors advanced to the foot of the throne & one by one knelt before lady Emily Charlesworth from whose hands they were to receive their recompense, first came the carroty-locked hero of the cart & asses.

"Sir" said the lady as she strove vainly to suppress the smile which his odd appearance excited "you have this day gained a miraculous victory over one of the most gallant & high-born gentlemen of Verdopolis & are well worthy of the golden wreath which I thus twine round your illustrious temples."

"Thank you madam" replied he bowing low "the Colonel's certainly a rum'un but I've matched him well to day & if you knew all you'd say so too"

"I do not doubt your ability to match any man" she replied laughing "& the Colonel in my opinion has no reason to be ashamed of his defeat since it was effected by such a consummate master in the art of over-reaching as you appear to be."

he thanked her again & with another low bow gave place to Colonel Percy.

As he the claimer of three crowns knelt gracefully at her feet & whispered some flattering compliment in an undertone lady Emily seemed visibly embarrassed. She did not blush but her forehead before so open & smiling grew dark & sad. For a moment she sat silent as if scarcely knowing how to address him but almost immediately regaining her self possession said in a soft yet firm voice while with her slender & jewelled fingers she bound the garland among his thickly clustered light brown curls.

"It gives me pleasure to be the instrument of rewarding one who has found his equal in three ardent contests. I trust our City will have a champion in every succeeding anniversary of the African Olympic Games"

"Fair lady" replied the Colonel "your approbation would be worth more to me than the transitory applause of ten thousand times the number that have shouted at my trivial exploits to day"

"Strive to deserve it" said she in a low quick voice. "& it shall not be withheld!"

The herald now summoned the nameless stranger to draw near, slowly & half reluctantly he advanced.

"Shall I bid the attendants to remove your helmet," asked lady Emily smiling, the unknown shook his head but made no reply.

"Well" returned she playfully "you are an uncourteous though a gallant archer, but not with standing your refusal to comply with my request I will acknowledge that I think you worthy of the bright garland which I thus twine amongst the Eagles feathers which form your crest."

he rose & with a stately inclination of the head withdrew. All was now concluded. the first celebration of the African Olympic Games was past & amidst a loud & triumphant peal of warlike music the mighty assembly of a million souls broke up & with a crush & tumult that might have annihilated worlds left the amphitheatre. This dispersion I need not describe, no lives that I am aware of were lost, but hundreds of bags, pockets, fobs, & reticules yielded up their contents in the melee while thousands of sides were bruised

almost to sinuweres? by an equal proportion of elbows.

Amongst the principal sufferers I am sorry to inform the reader our worthy friend Mr Gifford must be reckoned. At the first crush in spite of Ensign Bud's supporting arm which was tenderly passed round the excellent antiquary's waist he fell prone to the ground & in attempting to rise got entangled among the extended legs of half a score French messieurs who greatly to their own edification were pursuing their way through the huge press not on their heels like sensible people but on their heads. When these gentlemen felt the not very slight pressure of Mr Gifford's falling carcase, they testified their sense of its inconvenience by that disagreeable agitation of the limbs called kicking.

with the utmost difficulty & with the loss of his best hat & wig the Lawyer was at length rescued, but he had hardly gone twelve paces when his shoes were trodden from his feet & five minutes after his Sunday coat a rich black plush was torn violently from his back & borne off by some audacious thief. Groaning & sighing he still with the assistance of Bud continued gradually & painfully to push his way & had almost cleared the thickest part of the crowd when a hand was unceremoniously introduced into his breeches pockets & all the contents most dexterously extracted. But I need not trouble the reader with more of the unhappy mans misfortunes, suffice it to say that he did at length get home & was put to bed with unbroken bones, hot gruel & brandy administered in large doses induced a comfortable night's rest & next morning when he awoke he was able to curse all Games whether Greek Roman or African in unmeasured terms & to denounce instant vengeance on all who should hereafter propose attendance on their vanities to him.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

The Sun which had risen so brightly & cheerfully sank to repose with a magnificence worthy of its glorious advent, a short twilight followed^ the sea-billows for a time rolled in a dimly lustrous light to the fading shore, then came the moon. the evening stars began to look out singly from the soft pure sky, the night wind rose & before it a few pearly clouds which had been resting motionless on the horizon glided away beyond the skirting hills, at this tranquil hour the unknown archer emerging from a grove on the Niger's shady banks where he had been walking since he left the arena, turned his back to Verdopolis & striking into a bye-path which led up the at that period wild valley in which our City lies (for there were then no gardens or palaces & but few cultivated fields to varigate its natural beauties) soon forgot in the calm evening hush which surrounded him all remembrance of the scene he had quitted an hour before.

Slowly he entred a little sequestered glen formed by the junction of two lofty hills whose summits were covered with wood but whose bases excepting here & there a tall spreading tree, exhibited a green slope of unincumbered pasture land. He stopped & leaning on the tall spear which as I have before mentioned he carried in one hand stood a few minutes gazing at the lovely moonlight landscape which surrounded him on every side, then drawing a bugle from his belt he blew a clear but not loud blast which awoke many faint echos in the wooded hills above, after a brief interval of expectation steps were heard approaching & a figure wrapped in a mantle entered from the opposite end of the valley.

"Andrew." said the Archer "is that you my lad."

"Yes" replied a voice whose shrill childish tones & the speaker's diminutive size announced the tender age of the new comer.

"Come hither then & show me where you have hid the baggage. I am half dead with hunger, for it is full twelve hours since I have either eaten or drunk."

Andrew immediately scampered off & in a few minutes returned with a large portmanteau on his shoulders, he now threw aside his mask & the bright moonshine revealed the person of a boy who might be about thirteen years of age though from his countenance he seemed upwards of twenty the sharp keen features lighted by a pair of little quick cunning eyes retaining no traces of that juvenile rotundity which is considered the principal characteristic of a child, his dress was as singular as that of his master, being a short plaided petticoat or kilt & a round cap of the same stuff & laced leather buskins. He speedily unlocked the trunk & took from it a kind of basket the contents of which when spread on the smooth sward under the shadow of a magnificent elm tree formed a supper which no hungry man would have passed by with contempt, there was a couple of cold fowls a loaf of white bread some cheese a bottle of palm wine a vessel of the purest water which Andrew had procured from a small rivulet which half hidden by wild flowers washed the roots of the ancient elm-tree as it wandered slowly through the valley. While the archer satisfied the cravings of his own appetite he did not forget his follower who sat at a little distance ravenously devouring one of the fowl & a large portion of bread & cheese, when their meal was concluded & the fragments were cleared away, Andrew produced from the trunk a large plaided cloak in which his master wrapped himself & lying down on the green dewy grass with a moss-grown stone for his pillow he as well as the boy who lay at his feet were soon lulled by the low wind rustling in their leafy canopy & drowsy murmurs of the monotonous stream to a deep & dreamless slumber.

An hour elapsed & they still continued in a state of the most profound repose. The moon now high in heaven shone with a silvery clearness that almost transformed night into a fairer noon, in Arthur's words or something like them "all felt the heavenly influence of moonlight's milder day" when a human step suddenly broke the delicious calm reigning around & (unromantic incident) the apparition not of, "A lady fair and bright With a crown of flowers and a robe of light"

but of a smart footman in a blue coat with silver epaulettes appeared stealing down from the brow of one of the nearest hills, softly almost noiselessly he advanced to the unsuspecting Andrew & clapping a gag into his mouth which happened to be wide open bore him off kicking & struggling in his arms. Andrew's abduction however did not last long. an hour had scarcely passed before he returned alone & without awakening his master to inform him of what had occurred he lay down in his former place & in a few minutes was as fast asleep as ever.

The bursting sunlight & singing birds aroused the Archer just as the first beams broke forth in summer splendour. Springing lightly from his hard couch he stirred with his foot the still slumbering page.

"Get up Andrew" said he & roll out the contents of that trunk on to the grass. I must change this outlandish gear before I venture again in to the city, so stir yourself boy & here help me first to unbuckle this belt, why" continued he as the lad rose up reluctantly rubbing his eyes & yawning like one overcome with sleep "what ails you child have you been disturbed by fairies to night that you are so sluggish & drowsy in the morning?"

"No not I" said Andrew laughing rather hollowly & fixing his keen eyes on his master's face as if he would have penetrated to his inmost thoughts "No but I've been troubled with some ugly dreams."

"Ugly dreams? you little idiot what were they about?"

"About selling my soul to the old gentleman"

"Well did you complete the bargain?"

"yes & sealed it with a written oath"

"Come that was managing the affair in a business like way but now a truce to your nonsense sir & help me on with this strait waistcoat."

In a few minutes the archer had stripped off his becoming though peculiar dress & assumed in its stead a fashionable suit of clothes consisting of a blue frock coat which had something of a military air & white waistcoat & pantaloons.

"Now" said he when he had completed his toilet "Do you stay here Andrew. I am going to the city & shall most probably be back

before evening. Keep close in the wood till I return & speak to no mortal creature."

Andrew loudly promised implicit obedience & his master took his departure, the Archer in his new costume displayed none of that awkwardness which people usually feel when attired in a novel garment for the first time.

on the contrary it was evident from the perfect ease & grace of his movements which all partook of a lofty & martial character that he was not unaccustomed to such a mode of dress. With a slow, melancholy step he retraced the winding, bye-path by which he had ascended the valley on the previous evening, the passengers he met were few & far between for in those days it was a road but little frequented, two or three milk maids singing on their way and a few illegal rare lads who were returning from poaching over-night among the hills, together with five or six straightish legged gentlemen "Wahking out befahr braukfast to get an auppetite to de Melons & brahd & bautter" were the only persons with whom he exchanged a morning's salutation & these did not make their appearance till the latter end of his walk.

At about eight o'clock he reached Verdopolis, entering at the north gate he proceeded through a series of streets, squares, Rows & alleys along which even at this early hour the living stream of population had begun to flow rapidly till he reached a quiet street leading from Monmouth Square formed by two rows of respectable looking houses whose white window curtains & green Venetian blinds, proclaimed the comfortable circumstances of those who inhabited them. Halting at the twelfth mansion he gave a rousing alarm by means of the well-scoured bright brass knocker. In about two minutes the door was opened by a clean looking elderly Dame who the moment she caught a glimpse of our hero's person uttered a loud exclamation of surprise.

"Bless us Mr Leslie!" cried she "is that you? lord my poor eyes never thought to see your handsome face again"

"It is me indeed Alice, but how is your Master, is he at home?" "At home? yes indeed where else should he be I wonder, when you're standing at his door? but come in & I'll run to tell him the good news this minute."

Here the good woman led the way forward & showing Mr Leslie into an apartment ran off to do her errand, the room into which she had ushered him was a middle-sized parlour comfortably & even elegantly furnished, a bright fire was burning in the polished steel bars of a handsome grate & all the paraphernalia of a good breakfast appeared spread on a snow-white damask cloth which covered a round table in the centre of the room, but what principally attracted the eye was a number of very beautiful oil-paintings principally portraits arranged with judgement on the walls; all betrayed the hand of a genuine master in the art & some were executed with surprising grace & delicacy, the visitor's countenance expressed something like astonishment as he looked carefully round but his attention was soon attracted by the unclosing of the door, he started up & stepped eagerly forward as a young man rather above the middle size with a pale but interesting countenance & large intelligent black eyes entered.

"Well my dear Frederick" said he "I need not inquire how you are. your appearance & that of the house tells me & I suppose I have now only to congratulate you on Fortune's altered disposition."

"my Noble Benefactor" began Frederick De Lisle while a flush of joy suffused his colourless cheek. "How I rejoice to see you once again! are you still Mr Leslie the Artist or may I now be permitted to address you as -"

"No, No" interrupted his guest, "let Leslie be my name for the present, but Frederick you must have made a good use of the small sum I gave you if it has entitled you to reside in such a comfortable house as this."

"Yes" replied the young man "I think I may fairly claim the praise of having employed it to the best advantage yet it was not that alone which has obtained me the affluence I now enjoy. Your lordship must know that about three years since I fell in love (to use the common phrase) with a young & very lovely girl who soon appreciated the sincerity of my affection & returned it. Obstacles however apparently insurmountable opposed our union, her parents were rich & they disdained to unite their daughter to a man whose whole wealth lay in a brush & palett. for a long time Matilda wept & intreated in vain but at length her altered looks her pallid cheek & her attenuated form so far moved their compassion that they promised to sanction our marriage on condition that I should previously free myself from the pecuniary embarrassment in which I was then entangled, this however was impossible. I had scarcely sufficient employment to procure bread & as to laying by anything that was not to be thought of. At this wretched period your lordship condescended to become my pupil. the liberal salary which you paid me enabled me to discharge my debts in part & by the aid of your further munificent gift when you left Verdopolis I ultimately cleared the whole. My dear Matilda's parents kept their word & about six months since I was made the happiest of men. Employment has since poured in rapidly upon me & I trust that Fame the meed for which I have striven so long & perseveringly under distresses & difficulties which might have daunted the spirit of a saint will at length reward my unwearied endeavours."

here the door again opened and Mrs De Lisle entered, she was a young & elegant woman with a pretty face & very genteel manners. Her husband introduced our Hero to her as "Mr Leslie the Gentleman of whom you have often heard me speak". She curtsied & replied with a significant smile "I have indeed & the pleasure of seeing him in my house is as great as it was unexpected."

All three now sat down to a substantial breakfast of coffee eggs ham & bread & butter, the conversation during this meal was animated & interesting Mrs De Lisle joining in it with a propriety & good taste which did honour to Frederick's choice of a wife. When it was over she left the room pleading as an excuse for her absence the necessity of attending to household concerns, the two gentlemen being thus left alone recommenced the conversation in which they had been engaged before breakfast. Presently however they were again interrupted by the arrival of a carriage & the entrance of Alice who announced Colonel Percy & lady Emily Charlesworth.

"Ah" said De Lisle, "this is fortunate, your lordship I think will recollect lady Emily. she used to come often when you painted at my house & would sit for hours conversing with you about the fine arts, but my lord what is the matter are you ill?"

"No Frederick" replied Leslie though the deadly paleness which overspread his countenance seemed to contradict the truth of what he said, "merely a sudden pain in the head to which I am subject, it will soon pass off but in the meantime I should not like to be seen by these strangers. will they come into this apartment?"

"No I have ordered them to be shown into my studio. Lady Emily is come to sit for her portrait which I am painting for Colonel Percy to whom it is said she is shortly about to be united. they will make a fine couple, pity the Colonel is not as good as he is handsome."

"De Lisle" said Leslie quickly "I think it would amuse me if I could watch you paint this morning but at the same time I should

like to remain concealed myself, can you not contrive some means of effecting this?"

"Easily my lord. the library window looks into my studio, you may sit there & entertain yourself as you like."

"Come then" returned Leslie & both left the room together, the library into which Delisle conducted his guest was a small apartment furnished with a few well chosen books principally of the Belle Lettre class." one window looked into a little garden at the back of the house & the other partially shaded by a green curtain formed a post of observation by which the studio might be easily reconnoitred, here Leslie placed himself, the blood returned in full force to his pale cheek as he beheld Lady Emily more beautiful than he had seen her at the Games reclining gracefully on a sofa. a large velvet carriage mantle trimmed with costly fur fell in rich folds from her shoulders, her hat which was ornamented with a splendid plume of ostrich feathers she had laid aside & her hair turned up behind & fastened with a gold comb fell down on each side of her face in a luxurious profusion of glossy brown ringlets. she was quietly arranging the collar of a small silken-haired spaniel which lay on her lap & appeared to take little notice of the passionate protestations of the Colonel who was kneeling devotedly beside her. This circumstance however was unnoticed by Leslie: he marked only the attitude of both & an indignant frown darkened his lofty brow, their Love Conference however (if such it was) was soon interrupted by the entrance of Delisle. "Good morning" said he bowing low.

"Good morning" replied Colonel Percy "Now Sir call up all your skill summon inspiration to your aid for the beauty you have to depict is not earthly but heavenly"

"I hope" replied the artist as he seated himself at his easel & began to touch the lovely though still unfinished resemblance which was placed there "I hope you do not consider the attempt I have already made quite a failure"

"No not quite, but Mr Painter surely you have not the vanity to imagine that an imitation in oil and earths however skillfully managed can equal the bright reality of such a form & face as that you have now before you"

"Do you mean yourself Colonel or me?" inquired the fair sitter slyly.

"You to be sure. why do you ask the question?" "Because you gave so many furtive glances into that mirror that I thought your glowing panegyric must have been designed for the figure therein reflected."

"Hum I was merely admiring the countenance of a tolerably good- looking monkey which I saw peering through that window at you & which by the bye I have seen before in your company Delisle"

Lady Emily turned to the point indicated but nothing was now visible. She continued to sit for about two hours then becoming weary of a compulsory state of inactivity she ordered the carriage to be called & together with her escort Colonel Percy departed.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

Clydesdale Castle the Seat of the Marquis of Charlesworth was one of the few mansions which at that period adorned the Glass Town Valley: it was a large and magnificent Structure erected during the time of the Second Twelvys. the architecture was not of the light Grecian cast in which our modern Villas are built but grand & substantial, tall arched windows lighted the lofty turrets & pillared Norman Gateways gave entrance to the numerous vast halls which were contained under its embattled roof.

The Noble Proprietor of this feudal residence was Uncle & Guardian to the beautiful lady Emily Charlesworth whose parents dying when she was yet a child committed her with their last breath to the protection of her only surviving relative. This trust the Marquis discharged faithfully as the reader may perceive from the circumstance of his having appointed John Gilford Esquire Tutor to his niece & she in return regarded him with that affection which an amiable mind will always cherish towards those from whom it has received any benefit.

About a week after the time mentioned in my last Chapter Lady Emily was sitting one afternoon in her solitary chamber in the west turret. She was alone. her elbow rested on the little work table beside her & her full dark eyes were fixed with an expression of deep melancholy on the blue & far-distant mountain boundary which appeared through the open lattice. I cannot tell what she was thinking of for I never heard, but soon a few tears trickling down her soft cheek betrayed that her meditations belonged rather to *Il Penserosa* than *L'Allegra*; these mute monitors seemed to rouse her from her sad reverie, with a deep sigh she turned away from the window & drawing a harp towards her which stood near began to sing in a sweet low voice the following Petit chanson The night fell down all calm and still The moon shone out o'er vale & hill Stars trembled in the sky Then forth into that pale, sad light There came a gentle lady bright With veil & cymar^{!!} spotless white Fair brow & dark blue eye Her lover sailed on the mighty deep The Ocean wild and stern And now she walks to pray & weep For his swift & safe return Full oft she pauses as the breeze Moans wildly through those Giant trees As startled at the tone The sounds it waked were like the sigh Of spirits voice through midnight sky So soft, so sad so dearly That wandering wind swept on And ever as she listened Unbidden thoughts would rise Till the pearly tear-drop glistened All in her star-like eyes She saw her love's proud battle ship tossed wildly on the storm-dark deep By the roused wind's destroying sweep A wrecked & shattered hull And as the red bolt burst its shroud And glanced in fires o'er sea & cloud She heard a peal break deep & loud Then sink to echos dull And as that thunder died away She saw amid the rushing spray Her Edwards Eagle plume While thus that deathly scene she wrought And viewed in the dim realms of thought His soul appalling doom A voice through all the forest rang Up like a deer the lady sprang "Tis he 'tis he" she cried And ere another moments space In time's unresting course found place By heaven! & by our lady's grace Lord Edward clasped his bride The Song was ended but her fingers yet lingered among the harp strings from which they drew long wailing notes whose plaintive sound seemed all unsuited to the happy termination of the romance she had just been warbling, the tears she had before checked were now suffered to flow freely & faint sobs were beginning to reveal the secret grief which oppressed her when suddenly the door opened & a servant entered with the intelligence that a gentleman had arrived who wished to see her ladyship.

"A Gentleman!" exclaimed Lady Emily wiping her eyes and trying to assume some degree of composure "What is he like? have you never seen him before?"

"Never my lady, he is a personable young man with a very piercing look"

"Did he not tell you his name?"

"No I asked him what it was but he gave me no answer"

"that is strange. Is he alone or accompanied by servants?"

"He has one little page with him but that is all"

"Well, show him into my drawing room & say I will be down directly."

the Servant bowed & withdrew. Lady Emily now hastened to remove the traces of recent tears, she bathed her face in water, carefully arranged her dress & smoothed her dishevelled ringlets. Having thus discharged the duties of the toilette she proceeded to attend the unknown visitor. with a light tread she glided from her apartment down the staircase & through a portion of the corridor till she reached the drawing room, its rose-wood folding doors rolled back noiselessly at her touch on their well polished hinges & she entered unobserved by the stranger whose tall & kingly form stood before her opposite the great arched window through which he was gazing with folded arms, for an instant she paused to admire the statue-like dignity of his attitude. her heart she could not tell why beat wildly as she looked at him. But fearing that he might turn suddenly & take her unawares she proclaimed her presence by a gentle cough, he started & turned round. Their eyes met. the pensive expression which had dwelt in lady Emily's vanished like magic & a brilliant ray of animation sparked in its stead.

"Leslie, dear Leslie" cried she springing joyfully toward him. "Is it you? How long have you been in Verdopolis? Why did you not return long since? Oh, how often I have thought & cried about you since you went away"

She was going on, but observing that a cold & haughty bow was the only return her cordial welcome met with stopped in embarrassment. A mutual silence of some moments followed which was at length broken by Leslie who stood with his arms still folded gazing earnestly at her.

"Beautiful Hypocrite" said he & paused again while his finely cut lip quivered with the strongest emotion.

"What is the matter" asked lady Emily faintly "have I been too forward, too ardent in my expressions of pleasure at seeing you again after so long an absence?"

"Cease this unworthy acting" said her lover sternly "& do not think so meanly of me as to imagine I can be deceived by pretensions so flimsy, you have been too well employed during my absence to think much of me, another & doubtless in your opinion

a higher prize has been ensnared by your false though incomparable loveliness & now I am come to cast you from me as a perjured woman though my heart-strings should burst in agony with the effort. But” he continued in a voice of thunder, while all the lightnings of jealousy gleamed in his fierce dark eyes “I will not tamely give you up to the scoundrel who has dared to supplant me. No he shall have an even struggle, he shall wade through blood to obtain his stolen reward”

Leslie, Leslie” replied Lady Emily in a soft soothing tone “You have indeed been deceived, but not by me. sit down now calmly & tell me all you have heard to my disadvantage, you see I am not angry notwithstanding this is a far different reception to what I had ever expected to meet with from you”

“Syren” said Her yet unappeased lover “Who would imagine that so sweet a voice could be employed in the utterance of falsehoods or that such a lovely countenance should be a mere mask to conceal the hollow insincerity of a coquette’s heart”

Lady Emily whose fortitude was unequal to sustain this continued severity now burst into tears. Leslie deeply moved by her distress whether real or apparent, began to reflect what right he had to upbraid her in such haughty terms & to ask himself whether the reports which had awakened his suspicions might not be in themselves destitute of foundation. Under the influence of these thoughts he approached the Sofa on which she had thrown herself when unable to stand from excess of agitation & sitting down beside her took her hand, but she withdrew it with becoming pride.

“Mr Leslie” said she starting up “your words show the regard you once pretended to entertain for me is no more, you desire that we should part & be assured that whatever pain I may experience in renouncing one whom I have hitherto looked upon as my dearest friend, yet I shall not hesitate a moment to take this necessary though painful step. Farewell then, I trust that the bitterness of remorse for wrongs inflicted upon others will never be added to your portion of this world’s evils.”

As she spoke the blood rushed back to her terror blanched cheek her tearful eye shone like a meteor & her slender form seemed dilated with the swell of justly aroused pride. Leslie sat silent till she turned to depart then springing from his seat he hastily placed himself between her & the door.

“You shall not go” said he, “I am convinced that I was mistaken, the man who could hear your words & look on your countenance would be more or less than human if he could still doubt that you were innocent” Lady Emily continued to advance with an irresolute step but a smile now began to dimple her fair cheek.

“Well Leslie” she said “you are like a true artist one of the most capricious of men, but this moment you were so angry with me that I was almost afraid to remain in the room & now you will not let me leave me but” she continued while the arch smile more fully lit up her face, “Perhaps I shall not choose to remain now. I really am very angry & feel a great mind to tell Colonel Percy next time he comes (for I suppose he is the person you are jealous of) that I have cut his rival & shall marry him forthwith.”

“Hush Emily” replied Leslie leaving his post near the door “I cannot bear to hear you speak thus even in jest but Come let us sit down & tell me seriously who & what is the wretch whose name has just passed your lips.”

“He is a very handsome & accomplished man” she replied provokingly “and my uncle says one of the bravest soldiers in the army”

Leslie’s eye flashed & his brow darkened again “Am I still to think” he asked “that you entertain a partiality for the infamous villain?”

“Goodness” exclaimed the lady “I can’t I like two people at once? how monopolizing you are” the convulsive grasp with which her lover seized her hand & the flush which rose suddenly to his cheek warned her that she had trifled long enough, she proceeded in an altered tone “but though the Colonel is all I have described him yet I assure you, you have nothing to fear for I detest him most thoroughly & nothing on earth should either tempt or compel me to change my name from Emily Charlesworth to Emily Percy”

“Bless you” Exclaimed the enthusiastic Leslie “for that assurance! it has relieved me of a mighty load but tell me dearest how these vile reports by which I have been misled arose, Colonel Percy I presume visited you?”

“He did & made proposals to me but I remembered the absent & peremptorily rejected him. he then applied to my uncle who as ill-luck would have it behaved like all guardians & commanded me forthwith to receive him as my husband elect. I demurred, my Uncle insisted, the Colonel implored, hints of compulsion were thrown out. this only served to render me more restive, the chaplain was sent for. I then had recourse to tears, the Colonel seeing me so far softened became a little insolent, he said that instead of crying & pouting I might think myself very highly honoured by the preference of one whom all the ladies in Verdopolis would be glad of. this effectually awoke my spirit. I got up for I had been kneeling to both the oppressors & told him that he was the object of my scorn & hatred & that he never need hope to obtain any interest in a heart that was entirely devoted to another. When he heard this he stormed & frowned just as you did just now. my Uncle asked who the favoured suitor was. I said instantly that he was neither lord nor knight but a young & gifted artist, if you had seen the fit of astonishment that seized them both. they stood with mouths gaping & eyes staring like two images of surprise. the effect was perfectly ludicrous & despite of the fears which filled me I laughed outright, this only irritated them still more, the Colonel swore that he would compel me to marry him or die & my Uncle took oath on belt & brand that no man from king to beggar from Duke to Artist should be my husband except Colonel Percy. I smiled but said nothing. Well for a while after this I was confined to my room & not suffered to cross the threshold lest I might run away, this rigour injured my health: I grew pale & thin. My Uncle (who I know loves me notwithstanding his harshness) perceived the change & commanded that I should be set at liberty on condition of my consenting to accompany the Colonel for the purpose of having my portrait taken, the first time I went to De Lisle’s in order to sit Colonel Percy told me that he had discovered who my lover was & had even seen him several times, this frightened me a little but I consoled myself with the knowledge that you were at present absent from Verdopolis & therefore out of his reach but now you are returned I fear greatly that he will never rest till he has accomplished your destruction by some means”

“Emily” said Leslie as she concluded her brief narrative “You have acted generously & truly, you have been faithful to a poor & friendless artist or one whom you thought such & have rejected a man whose birth expectations & personal accomplishments render him an object of the highest admiration to every other individual of your own sex. I now know with a degree of certainty which admits no shadow of doubt that you love me for myself & that nothing of a selfish nature mingles with your regard. I owe it therefore to your disinterested affection to reveal my real rank & station in life. I am not what I seem a servile minion of fortune a low born son of Drudgery. No the Head of Clan Albryn, the Earl of St Clair, the Chieftain of the wild children of the mist Descends from a line of

ancestors as illustrious as any whose brows were ever encircled by the coronet of nobility. Alliance with me will not bring you to want & beggary but pure blood will be mingled, broad lands joined & loving hearts united in bonds dissoluble only by death. Come with me then Emily shake of at once the shackles which restrain you. free yourself from the importunities of a villain I will take you to my mountainous lands in the north & you shall be at once Countess of Saint Clair & Lady of seven thousand of the bravest warriors that ever gathered round a chieftain's banner, my castle on Elimbos is larger than your uncle's here & my brave clan will pay their lovely & gentle mistress the adoration due to a divinity"

As Leslie or as we must now call him Ronald Lord St Clair revealed his rank & power, the proud blood mounted to his forehead his eye flashed like that of one of his own wild eagles & the majesty of his step & bearing as he slowly paced the apartment proclaimed the descendant of a hundred Earls. Lady Emily caught the lofty enthusiasm which infused a higher beauty into his noble countenance & rising from her seat she frankly extended her hand towards him & said "Accept the pledge of my inviolable faith though the whole earth should unite against me I will never love another. "True till death " shall be my chosen motto. I cannot love you more than I did but I rejoice for your own sake that you can vie in rank with the proudest nobles of Africa." "Do you consent to go with me?" asked he "I do. at what time must I depart"

"this night at twelve o'clock meet me in the chestnut avenue" "I will be punctual" said the lady. "And now my lord tell me what your reason was for playing the incognito in Verdopolis."

"Why Emily you must know that I was educated in England. After leaving Oxford I resided some time in London, there I was of course admitted into the highest circles of society; being young & rich great attention was paid me. the ladies in particular treated me very graciously but I suspected that much of this especial favour was owing rather to my rank & fortune than to my personal qualities, this idea having once entered my head I could not by any means drive it out. So I determined to take a voyage to Africa & try what luck would befall an unknown & apparently friendless stranger. In Verdopolis I met with De Lisle, his manners & address pleased me while his merits & poverty excited my warmest sympathy. Enjoining the strictest secrecy I told him who I was & my motives for wishing to remain unknown. Having some knowledge of painting I determined to assume the character of an artist & accordingly placed myself under De lisle's tuition. At his house I met with you for you used to come there occasionally under the protection of your worthy tutor Mr Gifford to purchase copies & drawing materials, the consequence of these interviews I need not relate, in a short time we became firmly attached to each other & when I was about to declare my rank & formally to solicit your hand of Lord Charlesworth I was suddenly called away to my northern estates among the Branni mountains. Legal affairs & business connected with the clan unavoidably detained me for nearly twelve months & now I have returned to Verdopolis for the double purpose of claiming you as my bride & when that is accomplished joining the Duke of Wellingtons standard against the rebellious Ashantees"

"I have but one more question to ask" said lady Emily "How did the Colonel become acquainted with your person?"

"I know not except it be by having seen me at Delisle's house. I remember a gentleman strongly resembling him entering the studio one day while you were conversing with me & regarding us with an eye of the strictest scrutiny but the circumstance had slipped my memory until your question recalled it."

"there still remains a single point on which I wish to be satisfied" said Lady Emily smiling as if a sudden thought had struck her. "were you present at the Olympic Games in disguise?" "I was"

"what dress did you wear?" "the costume of my clan."

"then you were the gallant archer whose arrow shivered the white wand when every other failed."

"you have guessed cleverly Emily it is as you say." "Then Depend upon it my lord" said she seriously "Colonel Percy recognized you. His eye is keener than a hawk's & I saw him glance sharply at you when you half lifted your vizor to speak, could I have heard your voice I should have remembered it I am certain & doubtless he did so. Oh I fear his revengeful spirit will never rest till it has accomplished your destruction."

"Fear nothing for me Emily my sword is as good as his & my arm also, if he causes a tear to spring in that bright eye, his heart's blood shall pay for it. & now my dearest fare well, we must part for the present but before another sun rises the conjoined powers of earth & hell will be insufficient to divide us. Only remember the appointed time, be punctual & trust to me for the rest."

Lady Emily repeated the promise she had before given & the lovers separated each to make the necessary preparations. As Lord St Clair left the drawing room he saw a shadowy form hastily gliding down the dark corridor, fearful of their conversation having been overheard he pursued the retreating figure. at first he appeared to be gaining some advantage but suddenly it turned down a side passage & he lost sight of it. Chagrined at this failure & somewhat apprehensive of what this nimble-footed personage's design might be in lurking so suspiciously about, he thought of returning back & acquainting lady Emily with what he had seen, but just then the marquis of Charlesworth's gruff, stern voice was heard in the hall, so our hero thought it best to take his departure instantly lest his presence might be discovered by that dignitary & the whole plan of elopement blown up. he proceeded therefore to the stables where he found both page & horse in readiness, mounting his beautiful Arabian charger with one glance at the western turret & one sigh for his lady-love he dashed out of the yard & in a few minutes was half way on the road to Verdopolis.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

For the present I must leave Lord St Clair & lady Charlesworth to see what Colonel Percy was about while they were preparing to cheat him so cleverly. The Colonel occupied a large & splendid mansion in Dim- dim Square then a fashionable quater of the city though now the favourite abode of briefless lawyers, non-commissioned officers unpat- ronized authors with others of the tag-rag & bobtail species, this residence together with the expensive establishment of servants, carriages &c. appertaining to it was kept up partly by the owners pay, partly by his gains at the billiard & card-table & partly by liberal borrowings from usurers on the strength of his great expectations, there in a magnificent saloon furnished with all the elegance that luxury or taste could devise Colonel Percy sat alone on the afternoon spoken of in my last chapter, his fine form was stretched in very unmilitary ease on a silken sofa. his languid eye & pale cheek revealed the dissipation of the previous night while the empty decanter & glass which stood on a table near him showed that the stimulus of wine had been employed to remove his lassitude though without effect, while he was lying thus with his hands pressed to his lofty & aristocratic forehead a window of the saloon was suddenly opened and a man with a red head & ragged inexpressibles sprang in from without.

"Beast" said Percy starting up with a loud oath "how dare you enter my house in such a brazenly impudent manner. How dare you come near me in fact after the manner in which you have lately treated me?"

this reception did not in the least seem to daunt the unabashed entree whom no doubt our readers will have already recognized as the hero of the ass drawn chariot, on the contrary he advanced with a smiling countenance & seizing the colonel's hand with his horny paw replied "How is all with you my sweet rogue, I'm afraid you're not quite as your best friends could wish, that pale face & this feverish hand tell tales"

"Curse you for the hardest scoundrel that ever deserved a hempen neckcloth" replied the Colonel at the same time dashing the other hand into his face with a violence that would have felled any other man but which only drew a horse-laugh from the sturdy charioteer. "Curse you ten thousand times I say how in the name of body & soul dare you face me alone & without arms after our last transaction?"

"Why what I have I done to thee my Emperor of Rogues?"

"What have you done to me brute? Did I not bribe you with two hundred guineas to cut out Captain Wheeler from running his chariot at the games by becoming a competitor yourself with your vile cart & asses? did I not give you fifty guineas more in advance to let me win & after swearing a hundred oaths of fidelity did you not break them all & by so doing swindle me out of twenty thousand pounds for I had laid a wager to that amount on my success?"

"Well & if I did all this" replied the carrotty haired gentleman "was it not just what you would have done in my situation? I had your two hundred & fifty pounds safe in my breeches pocket when by ill or good luck which you please as soon as it was publickly known that I was to run upwards of forty bets were laid against me. I accepted them all & so in self defence was obliged to do my best, but come! he continued "this is not what I intended to talk about, my purpose for coming here was to beg the loan of a few pounds; I've spent every farthing of what I got last week in drink & other matters"

this demand was made in a quiet self-complacent tone as if the request had been one of the most reasonable in the world. Colonel Percy could bear it no longer, quivering all over & deadly pale with rage he snatched a loaded pistol from his pocket & discharged it full at him. this attack like the former produced no other effect than a fiendish laugh, the shot flew from his head and in the rebound one of them struck the Colonel so smartly as to produce blood. Baffled in this manner a second time he threw down the weapon & began to pace the apartment with furious strides.

"Fool that I am" cried he "Why do I waste my strength in vain? the Demon as I might have known before now is impervious to fire or shot, my fruitless attempts only expose me to his derision"

"Ha, Ha, Ha" shouted his tormentor "that's true Rogue, so now sit down & let's have a little sensible conversation"

Percy exhausted with the efforts he had made threw himself mechanically into a chair: "S'death" said he in a calmer tone "You're not a man as sure as I live you're an evil spirit in the flesh a true fiend incarnate. no human being could have lived after a shower of such hailstones as those"

S death (for such was the unblushing swindler's name) made no answer but rising from his seat went to a sort of beaufet or side-board "which stood several bottles of wine &c. and taking a case of liquers first helped himself to a brimming bumper & then pouring out another advanced with it to Rogue, Percy I mean.

"here charmer" said he lifting it to his lips "here taste this cordial you look faintish I think & should have something to comfort your poor heart. "

the Colonel who at that time was no drunkard whatever he may have become since just sipped of the offered beverage & returned it to Mr S'death by whom it was annihilated at a draught, the Conversation was now carried on in a more animated & less violent strain than before. Percy's anger seemed to have been in some measure appeased when he found that it was useless to exert it against one whom he could not possibly injure. Still however half at least of every sentence they addressed to each other was composed of oaths & execrations, S'death continued to demand a loan of twenty pounds which Percy for some time refused declaring that he had not that sum in the world. S'death then tried to intimidate him & threatened to inform against him for certain highly criminal transactions in which he had been concerned, this had the desired effect: the Colonel immediately unfastened a diamond clasp from his stock & throwing it on the floor commanded him with an oath "to take that & be off". the hardened villain picked it up with a chuckle &, going again to the side-board helped himself to another tumbler of liqueur. he then made his exit through the open window saying as he went away "Good bye Rogue at this moment I have bank-bills for two thousand pounds in each waistcoat pocket" with these words he scampered off followed by the discharge of a second pistol.

"Infernal scoundrel" said the colonel as he closed the sash with violence. "I wish the earth would yawn & swallow him up or the skies rend & strike him dead with a flash of his native element"

As he uttered this pious aspiration, he flung himself again on the sofa from which he had been roused by his unwelcome visitor. Two hours elapsed before he was again disturbed but at the end of that time a low tap was heard at the door.

"Come in beast whoever you are" shouted he in a loud voice, the door softly unclosed & a footman in livery entered. "what do you want now scoundrel?" asked his master furiously.

"merely to tell your honour that the green Dwarf has just arrived quite out of breath & says he has important information to communicate."

"the green Dwarf! show him into my library & say I'll come directly"

The servant bowed & left the room. Colonel Percy followed him almost immediately & proceeded to the library. there we shall now leave him to revisit Clydesdale Castle.

Lord St Clair had hardly left Lady Emily's private drawing-room before her uncle the Marquis of Charlesworth entered it. he was a tall & stately old gentleman between sixty & seventy years of age. his grey locks curled & powdered with the most scrupulous nicety surrounded a countenance whose fresh weather-beaten skin, stern aquiline features & peculiar expression would have at once marked him out to the attentive observer as a veteran soldier even if his military jack boots & enormous sword had not done so more decidedly.

"Well Emily" said he saluting his niece who had run forward to meet him. "How are you this evening love? I'm afraid you've had a dull day of it sitting here alone"

"O no uncle" said she "I never in the least feel the want of company. my books & music & drawing give me sufficient employment without it"

"That's well, but I think you have not been quite alone this evening, has not the Colonel been with you?"

"No" replied Lady Emily "why do you ask me uncle"

"because I saw a very handsome horse standing in the yard which I concluded to be his, but since it was not pray what other visitor have you had?"

this was an unexpected question. lady Emily however was not thrown off her guard by it. she instantly did what perhaps will not be thought very becoming in the heroine of a novel viz coined a little lie.

"Oh" said she carelessly "I suppose the horse must have belonged to Mr Lustring the linen-drafter's apprentice, he has been here this afternoon with some articles which I bought at his master's shop the other day & now uncle" she continued willing to change the conversation to some less ticklish subject "tell me what you have been doing in the city to day"

"Why" said he "in the first place I went to Waterloo Palace for the purpose of soliciting an audience of the Duke. our interview lasted two hours & when it was over his Grace requested my company to dinner, there I saw the Duchess who was as affable & agreeable as ever. she asked kindly after you & desired me to say that she should be happy to have the pleasure of your society for a few weeks at Verdopolis"

"Sweet creature" exclaimed lady Emily "I love her more than any body else in the world except you uncle & perhaps one or two besides but did you see the little baby?" "Yes"

"Is it a pretty child?"

"remarkably so but I fear it will be spoiled: the Duke seems disposed to indulge it in everything & the Duchesses whole existence is evidently wrapped up in it"

"And no wonder, pray what's it called?"

"Arthur I believe"

"Does it seem well-dispositioned?"

"I really dont know. it will be tolerably headstrong I think, there was a regular battle between it & the nurse when she attempted to convey it out of the room after dinner, now have you any more questions to ask concerning the little imp?"

"Not at present. what did you do when you left the palace?" "I stepped into the Genii's Inn & had a bottle of wine with Major Sterling, after that I proceeded to our barracks where I had some business to transact with the officers of my regiment, when this was finished I went to Mr Trefoil's & purchased something for my neice to wear on her wedding-day which I intend shall soon arrive"

here the Marquis took from his pocket a small casket in which when it was opened appeared a superb diamond necklace with earrings, finger-rings & brooches to correspond, he threw them into lady Emily's lap. a tear started into her eye as she thanked him for this costly present & at the same time thought what an act of disobedience to her kind Uncle's will she was about to commit. He observed it & said "now my love let us have no piping. the Colonel is an admirable fellow, a little wild perhaps but marriage will soon cure him of that"

A long silence followed, both Uncle & neice judging by their pensive countenances seemed to be engaged in sorrowful reflections. At length the former resumed the conversation by saying "In a few days Emily we shall have to be separated for some time" "How?" exclaimed lady Emily starting & turning pale for her thoughts instantly reverted to Colonel Percy.

"Why my love" replied the Marquis "News has lately arrived that the Ashantees are mustering strong. the Duke therefore considers an addition to the army requisite. several regiments have been ordered out as reinforcements among which number is the ninety-sixth & I being Commander must of course accompany it. it is on this account that the Duchess of Wellington has invited you to pay her a visit for she very kindly considers that you will feel Clydesdale Castle a very dull & lonely residence in my absence. I hope you will accept the invitation my love"

"Certainly" replied lady Emily in a faint voice for her heart misgave her when she thought of the deceitful part she was acting towards the careful & affectionate guardian from whom she was about to be separated perhaps for ever.

Supper was now announced & when this meal was concluded Lady Emily pleading a slight head-ache as an excuse for retiring early bade her uncle good night & with a heavy heart proceeded to her little chamber in the western Turret. When she reached it & had secured the door she sat down to consider a little of the decisive step she was about to take. after long & deep meditation she arrived at the conclusion that there were but two practicable modes of acting namely either to obey her uncle prove false to her lover & sacrifice

her own happiness for life or to disobey the marquis, be faithful to St Clair & run away with him according to her promise. Driven to such a dilemma who can blame her if she made a choice of the latter course & determined to run the hazard of an elopement rather than to await the evils which delay might produce. Just as her resolution was fixed the Castle-bell began in deep and solemn tones to announce the eventful hour of midnight. Each stroke of the resounding hammer seemed in her excited imagination a warning voice enjoining her instant departure. As the last hollow echo died away to the profoundest silence she started from the chair where she had hitherto sat motionless as a statue & proceeded to wrap herself in a large hooded mantle such as was then frequently worn by the ladies of Verdopolis & which served the treble purpose of a veil, hat, & cloak.

Thus attired she stole noiselessly from her chamber & instead of proceeding toward the grand staircase directed her steps to the winding turret stair which led to an unoccupied hall in which was an arched gate opening directly into the park. As she softly entered this hall she perceived by the moonlight which was streaming brilliantly through the tall latticed windows a dark figure standing near the gate through which she was to pass. Lady Emily was not much of a philosopher & this appearance startled her not a little for she instantly remembered a traditionary story of a wicked fairy who was said to haunt this apartment. Her fears on this head however were soon relieved by hearing the rattling of a bunch of keys accompanied by the gruff murmuring tones of a man's voice.

"I wonder" said the supposed apparition in soliloquy "I wonder what that beast of a light chose to go out for, it's a rare thing to be sure for me to be in this dog-hole at midnight without a candle, that last pint made my hand rather unsteady & I can't see to find the Key-hole."

Lady Emily now recognized in the speaker a man-servant whose office it was to secure all the castle-gates before retiring to rest, the urgency of her situation immediately suggested an expedient which considering the muddled state of the man's brain could hardly fail of success. She wrapped herself closely in the mantle & advancing into the middle of the hall said in a voice as commanding as she could muster, "Mortal I command thee to depart from the Great fairy Asherah's abodef." the effect of this ruse was instantaneous. He flung down the keys with a shout of terror & scampered off as fast as his heels could carry him. Lady Emily had now no difficulty in unbaring the portal & making her premeditated escape, with the lightness & swiftness of a liberated Deer she bounded across the moonlit lawn towards the appointed place of rendezvous.

A chill & dreary wind was sweeping among the lofty chestnut trees as she wandered under their huge boughs impatiently awaiting her lover's arrival. The uncertain light now streaming through a wide opening as the swelling breeze suddenly bowed all the branches in one direction & now when it died away & they sprang back to their former station flinging a thousand silvery checkers on the leaf-strewn pathway produced shadows equally uncertain, sometimes it seemed as if a hundred ghosts were gliding among the mighty trunks, beckoning with their dim hands & vanishing as she approached them. Occasionally too a cloud would suddenly obscure the moon, & then in the dense darkness which followed the creaking of branches, the rustling of leaves & the wild howling of wind formed a combination of doleful sounds which might have impressed the stoutest heart with terror.

For half an hour she continued to walk slowly about shivering in the cold night air & at intervals pausing to listen for some advancing step. At length she heard a rumbling noise like the wheels of some vehicle: it drew near: the tramp of horses feet became distinctly audible when suddenly it ceased altogether, five anxious minutes passed, nothing was heard. Lady Emily listened & listened. She began to doubt whether her ears had not deceived her but now the rustling of the dead leaves foretold an approaching footstep. She knew the tread, none but St Clair had such a stately & martial stride. Forward she darted like an arrow from a bow & in another instant was clasped to Lord Ronald's bosom. After the first mute greetings were over he said in a low smothered tone, "Come dearest let us not lose a moment, silence & despatch are necessary for our safety." they accordingly proceeded down the avenue at the end of which a carriage was awaiting their approach, into it Lady Emily was handed by her lover who as he warmly pressed the hand which had been put into his as she entered the chaise whispered in the same suppressed voice as before that he would follow her on horse-back. "Very well my lord" said Emily, gently returning his grasp. He closed the door mounted a horse which stood near, gave the word of departure & soon by the aid of four wheels & six steeds the fair runaway left her guardian's castle far behind.

In less than an hour they had rolled over the four miles of road which intervened between them and Verdopolis, passed through the wide streets of that city now all still & desolate & entered a great road which ran northward through an extensive forest, after two hours travelling through the dense gloom of woodland shade the carriage turned aside from the mainpath into a bye-way. They now struck still deeper into the brownish obscurity of oak & palm, elm & cedar, darkly & dimly branch rose above branch each uplifting a thicker canopy of night like foliage till not a single ray of light could find an opening by which to direct the belated traveller's passing underneath. At last to Lady Emily's great satisfaction the trees began to grow thinner; gradually they assumed a scattered appearance & ere long the carriage entered an open glade where standing in the full brilliancy of moonlight there appeared a lofty, & ruinous tower. Wall-flowers were waving from its mouldering battlements & ivy-tendrils twined gracefully round the stone mullions of windows from which the glass had long disappeared. Lady Emily shuddered as the carriage stopped before the iron gate of this dreary edifice.

"This will be a dismal hole to sleep in" said she to herself "But why should I be afraid? St Clair is certainly the best judge of the places we ought to halt at"

The door was now unfastened by a foot-man who as the Earl had not yet come up offered to assist her in getting out of the carriage. When she had descended the man proceeded to demand entrance, the loud clamorous din which was produced by the agitation of the rusty knocker strangely interrupted that profound & solemn silence which reigned through the primeval forest. While it awoke a hollow echo within the grey desolate ruin. After a long pause the withdrawal of bolts & bars was heard. The portals slowly unfolded & revealed a figure whose appearance was in the most perfect keeping with every thing around, it was that of an old woman bent double with the weight of years: her countenance all wrinkled & shrivelled wore a settled expression of discontent while her small, red eyes gleamed with fiendlike malignity, in one shaking hand she held a huge bunch of rusty keys & in the other a dimly glimmering torch.

"Well Bertha" said the footman "I have brought you a visitor, you must show her up to the highest chamber for I suppose there's no other in a habitable condition."

"No how should they I wonder" replied the hag in an angry mumbling tone "When no body's slept in them for more than sixty long years, but what have you brought such a painted toy as this here for? there's no good in the wind I think"

"Silence you old witch" said the man "or I'll cut your tongue out." then addressing Lady Emily he continued "I hope madam you'll

excuse such an attendant as she is for the present: had there been time to procure a better my master would not have failed to do so”

Lady Emily replied “that she could make every allowance for old age “ & was proceeding to speak a few kind words to the miserable being when she turned abruptly away & muttering “follow me my fine madam an you want to see your sleeping-place” hobbled out of the apartment. Our heroine immediately complied with her request or rather command, & leaving the roofless hall in which she then stood, followed the hideous crone through a suite of damp empty rooms through which the wind was sighing in tones too wildly mournful not to communicate a feeling of sympathetic melancholy to the heart of every listener, at length they reached a room smaller than the others to which a canopy-couch with faded velvet curtains a few chairs, a table & an old-fashioned carved wardrobe gave a habitable if not a comfortable appearance, here the old woman stopped & placing the candle on the table said “Now here you may lie till tomorrow if spirits don’t run away with you”

“Oh I have no fear of that” replied lady Emily forcing a laugh “but my good Bertha can you not light a fire in that grate for it’s very cold?”

“No not I” replied the hag “I’ve something else to do indeed” & with these ungracious words she walked or rather crept out of the room.

When she was gone lady Emily very naturally fell into a fit of rather sorrowful musing. The clandestine & secret nature of the past the dreariness of the present & the uncertainty of the future all contributed to impress her mind with the deepest gloom. Ere long however the image of St Clair rising like the sun above a threatening horizon dispelled the sadness which hung over her mind.

“Soon” thought she “he will be here & then this decayed tower will to me wear the aspect of a kings palace”

Scarcely had this consoling reflection been uttered in a half whispered soliloquy When a stately stride & jingling spurs sounded from the antichamber. the door which stood ajar was gently pushed open & the Earls tall form wrapped in a travelling cloak & with a plumed bonnet darkly shading his noble features appeared at the entrance.

“You are come at last” said lady Emily. “How long you have been, I was almost beginning to fear that you had lost your way in that dismal wood”

“Beautiful Creature” replied he in a tone which thrilled through her like an electrical shock “I would give every thing I possess on earth to be in reality an object of such tender interest in your eyes, but alas I fear that your sweet sympathy is directed to one who while I live shall never more hear it expressed by that silvery voice. Behold me fair lady & know into whose power you have fallen”

So saying he flung off” at once the enshrouding cloak & hat & there stood before the horror stricken lady not the form of her lover St Clair but that of his rival Colonel Percy. The ghastly paleness which instantly overspread her face & the sudden clasp of her hands alone proclaimed what feelings passed through her mind as she beheld this unexpected apparition.

“Come cheer up” continued the Colonel with a scornful smile. “It’s as well to settle your mind now for I swear by every-thing earthly or heavenly, sacred or profane that this painter-lover of yours, - this romancing arrow-shooting artist has seen your face for the last time” “Wretch” exclaimed lady Emily her eyes sparkling with scorn & hatred “Know that he whom you call my painter lover has higher & purer blood in his veins than you. he is Earl St Clair of Clan Albyn & you are but the dependent hanger on of a noble relative”

“So he has told you” returned Percy “but damsel be he lord or limner I have fairly outwitted him this time, his chariot wheels tarried somewhat too long methinks. mine were better oiled - they ran smoother. I won the race & have borne off the prize triumphantly, he may now cry St Clair to the rescue but none of his plaided minions can reach the length of this dark & unknown retreat,”

“Unprincipled villain” said lady Emily whose high spirit was now fully roused “you have acted treacherously, you have adopted means totally unbecoming the honour of a gentleman or never should I have been thus ensnared by your toils”

“Humph” replied the colonel “I am not one of those punctilious fools who consider honour as the God of their Idolatry. Eavesdroppers, spys, or false-witnesses are all equally acceptable to me when there is a great end in View which can be more easily obtained by their assistance.”

“Colonel Percy” said lady Emily “for I can call you by no name so detestable as your own do you intend to keep me in this tower or to send me back to Clydesdale Castle?”

“I shall keep you here most assuredly till you promise to become my wife & then you shall re-appear in Verdopolis with a magnificence suitable to the future Duchess of Beaufort”

“Then here I remain till death or some happier chance relieves me, for not all the tortures that man’s ingenuity could devise should ever induce me to marry one whose vices have sunk him so low in the ranks of humanity as yours have one who openly renounces the dominion of honour & declares that he has given himself up to the blind guidance of his own depraved inclinations”

“Excellently well preached” remarked the Colonel with a sneer “but fair worshipper of honour this resolution will not prevent the proposed incarceration which shall be inflicted on you as a sort of punishment for having flagrantly violated the decrees of that Deity whose cause you so eloquently advocate, pray my lady was it quite consistent with the dictates of honour to deceive your old doting uncle and elope at midnight with an unknown adventurer?”

this taunt was too much for lady Emily, the remembrance of her Uncle & of what his sufferings would be when her disappearance should be known instantly destroyed that semblance of dignity which pnde had taught her to assume in order to overawe her suitor’s fam- jhar insolence. She leant her head on her hand & burst into a flood of bitter tears.

Those crystal drops” said the Colonel totally unmoved by her ress Tell me that it would be no very difficult matter to soften your apparently stubborn heart. could I but remain here one day longer I am certain that the powers of persuasion I possess would succeed in bringing my Queen of Beauty to reason but unfortunately dire necessity commands my immediate departure. Before Sunrise I ought to be in Verdopolis & day is already breaking over those eastern Hills. Farewell” he continued in a more serious tone, “Farewell lady Emily, I am going where their is likely to be hot work & perhaps some black rebel’s sabre may before long rid you of a sincere though rejected lover & the world of what most men call a villain.”

“Farewell Colonel” replied his weeping captive “And remember that if such should be your fate the recollection of what you have this night done will not tend to alleviate the agonies of death”

“Pshaw” said he with a reckless laugh “do you think I have any fears on that score? no my conscience if I ever had any has been long seared. Immortality finds no place in my creed & death is with me but an abbreviated term for lasting sleep.’ Once more farewell”

with these words he snatched her hand kissed it fervently & departed. The twilight glimmer of dawn was now stealing through the narrow casements of lady Emily’s prison & falling on her face & person as she lay stretched on the tattered velvet couch where overcome with fatigue she had now thrown herself revealed a touching picture of Beauty in Distress.’ her hair hung in loose & neglected curls on her snowy neck & shoulder her eyes were closed her long dark lashes wet with tears rested motionless on her cheek except when a fresh drop trembled on their silken fringes, her face usually blooming was now pale as alabaster from the misery of the sleepless night she had passed. one white hand & arm supported her head on the pillow & the other confined the folds of the dark mantle in which she was still partially enveloped.

After some time in spite of the wretchedness of her situation, separated it might be for ever from all she held dear on earth, & confined in a solitary ruin with no other attendant than the withered hag Bertha, she fell into a deep slumber & while she enjoys this temporary respite from affliction we will revert to other matters.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

It is well known that the Great War between the Ashantee's & Twelves ended, after many bloody & obstinate battles in the complete subjugation of the former, their prince being slain their nation nearly annihilated, their metropolis destroyed & the circumjacent country reduced to a condition of the wildest & most appalling desolation which the imagination of man can conceive. Quashie the Kings only son, then at the tender age of four or five years was taken prisoner. At the General Partition of booty he with other captives fell to the share of his Grace the Duke of Wellington from whom he experienced as much care & tenderness as if he had been that Monarch's son instead of his slave. In these gilded fetters the young prince grew up, his literary education was duly cared for but he declined to profit by the instructions bestowed on him further than as it regarded the acquisition of the English & Ashantee languages & the capability of expressing himself in both by pen as well as tongue. In bodily exercises & military affairs however the case was different, everything relating to these he learnt with an avidity which showed how fully he inherited his father's warlike spirit. At the age of seventeen, he was a tall handsome youth, black as jet & with an eye full of expression & fire, his disposition was bold, irritable, active, daring & at the same time deeply treacherous.

It now began to appear that notwithstanding the care with which he had been treated by his conquerors he retained against them as if by instinct the most deeply rooted and inveterate hatred. Since his fifteenth year he had been accustomed to take long excursions by himself among the mountains & forests of Ashantee for the purpose as he said of hunting the wild animals that abound there, but subsequent events showed that his real employment during these expeditions was discovering & prompting to Rebellion the hidden tribes of Africans who after the Destruction of Coomassie & the slaughter of King Quamina had concealed themselves in fastnesses inaccessible to any but a native of the country. When he had sufficiently kindled in these ^Wild savages a spirit of slumbering discontent, & roused them to make an effort for regaining that independence as a nation which they had lost, he in conjunction with the celebrated brothers Budi & Benini formerly his father's favourite counsellors unfurled the Royal standard of Ashantee & summoned the scattered remnant of that once mighty empire to join him without delay at the foot of Mount Pindus.

It seemed as if this invocation had called from their graves a portion at least of the vast army which fourteen years since had reddened with their blood the lofty heights of Rosendale-Hill. Multitudes flocked to his banner from the mountain glens & caverns of Jibbel Kumri from the unexplored regions of Inner Africa & from the almost boundless Desert of Sahara, so that in a few weeks no less than fifteen thousand armed natives of a kingdom which was supposed to have been extirpated declared themselves ready to shed the last drop of their blood in vindication of Quashie the second's claim to his ancestral throne. With this determination they marched toward Verdopolis & had arrived within four hundred miles of that City before intelligence of what had taken place reached the twelves. When the fact of this rebellion was known however the Duke of Wellington immediately desired that the punishment of the rebels might be left to him as the young viper who commanded them had been nourished on his own hearth & brought up by him with almost parental tenderness, his request was immediately granted & the duke despatched ten thousand troops under the command of General Leaf a descendant by the way of the famous Captain Leaf to stop the progress of the insurgents.

When Quashie heard of the formidable force which was advancing against him he sent an ambassador to Gondar requesting assistance from the Abyssinian King & in the mean time commenced a very orderly retreat. Ras Michael who detested the British readily permitted an army of eight thousand soldiers to assist Quashie in his bold enterprise against them. With this reinforcement that young warrior ventured to give the enemy battle. An engagement accordingly ensued near Fateconda on the Senegal Which after a very obstinate contest ended rather in favour of the Verdopolitans though the victory they gained was of that nature that another similar one would have been total destruction. A fresh addition now arrived from Abyssinia so that the army of the rebels was very little the worse for their defeat, while Leaf's force amounted barely to six thousand men. The Duke being informed of this state of things immediately ordered out sixteen regiments & placing himself at their head marched without delay to the scene of the action. On his arrival he found that the enemy had been joined by a large body of Moors from the North so that he was still far inferior in numbers but trusting to the superior discipline of his troops he determined to stand his ground without further reinforcement. Having given the reader this necessary information I will now proceed with my narrative in a more detailed & less historical style.

It was a glorious evening in the end of summer when the hostile armies lay encamped on opposite banks of the river Senegal. The sun was slowly approaching the horizon of a speckless sky & threw his parting rays with softened brilliancy over a scene of unsurpassed loveliness. between the two hosts lay a beautiful valley where groves of delicate-leaved tamarind trees & tall palmyras sweetly shadowed the blue bright waters of the wandering stream. A cluster of deserted huts whose inhabitants had fled at the approach of soldiers crowned the gently-sloped activity which embosomed the glen. on one side in the largest of these the Duke of Wellington had taken up his quarters & here he now sat surrounded by four of his principal officers. Two of these are already known to our readers being the Marquis of Charlesworth & Colonel Percy, of the remaining two the first was a middle- sized man with broad shoulders & spindle shanks: his forehead was rather high his nose large & projecting, his mouth wide & his chin remarkably long, he was dressed in uniform with a star on his breast & large cambric ruffles at each wrist, the other was a little personage with jointless limbs, a chubby face & a pale pink wig of frizzled silk surmounted by a tall black hat on which was an ornament of carved wood, these officers were conversing with each other in undertones not to disturb the duke's meditations who sat with his eyes fixed on the wide prospect which opened before him & which was bounded by a dim sweeping milk-white line indicating the commencement of the great sandy desert.

Bobadil" said he suddenly addressing himself to the former of the two gentlemen I have just described "do you not perceive something moving in the direction of the enemies camp? it is under the shadow of that lofty hill to the north & appears like a dark & compact body of men, surely it is not some new ally?"

Bobadil came forward & began to poke out his neck strain & wink his eyes, look through his fingers &c. but finally declared he could perceive nothing, the Marquis of Charlesworth & General Leaf the owner of the pink wig were equally unsuccessful.

"You are a set of moles" said the Duke "I see them most distinctly they have rounded the hill & their arms are glittering brightly in the sunshine . come hither Percy can't you see that flashing hedge of spears with a banner displayed in the rear?", "Certainly my lord" replied Percy whose younger eyes could easily discern what was quite lost to the dimmed optics of the old Generals "they are now turned from the rebels & seem advancing towards us." A silence of a quarter of an hour here ensued during which the Duke continued to gaze intently at the approaching army, for such it was now distinctly seen to be. they slowly wound away from the Ashantee camp & entering a deep valley were for the present lost to sight. But ere long a burst of wild music heralded their reappearance, gradually they emerged from the sinuous winding of the Glen which had concealed them & in martial array advanced to the sound of shrill pipes & deep-toned kettle drums along the right bank of the Senegal.

"These are not foes but friends" exclaimed the Duke starting up. "Upon my word St Clair has kept his promise well, I did not think his northern hills could send forth such a fine body of troops.f"

"Who are they my lord?" exclaimed all the officers at once, with the exception of Percy, whose brow had suddenly grown dark at the mention of St Clair.

"The men of Elimbos, the lads of the mist" replied his Grace. "Here Percy order my horse & your own & attend me whilst I go to meet them."

Percy left the hut & in a few minutes the Duke & himself were galloping down towards the valley. As they drew near that Highland host my father frequently expressed his admiration at the perfect order in which the ranks moved, the athletic appearance & uncommon stature of the men who formed them & the clean well burnished appearance of their arms & equipments, just as they reached the ad

vanced guard a general halt was called, both rode through the unfolding columns till on gaining the centre of the little army, they perceived the Earl surrounded by his choicest vassals all dressed in the green tartan of their clan & bearing spears, bows quivers & small triangular shields. Near him stood a gigantic warrior whose snow white hair & beard proclaimed advanced age while from his erect bearing herculean frame & sinewy limbs it was easy to perceive that he retained unimpaired all the vigorous powers of youth, he bore in one hand a huge spear proportionate to his own Titanic size from which floated the broad folds of a green banner bearing as a device a golden Eagle with expanded wings & the motto "I dwell on the rock". This person was the celebrated Donald of the Standard called in common parlance the ape of the Hills. he is now one hundred & ten years of age & consequently was at that period ninety." After a cordial greeting on each side the Duke proceeded to direct St Clair how to encamp his men & to give him other instructions which it is unnecessary here to recapitulate, their conference being ended he took leave for the night & returned with Colonel Percy to his own quarters.

It may now be as well to connect the broken thread of my rambling narrative before I proceed further.

When St Clair reached Verdopolis after his interview with lady Emily Charlesworth at Clydesdale Castle he ordered his page to go to the nearest place where carriages were let out to hire & order one to be in readiness by eleven o'clock that night, from some unexplained cause of delay it was not prepared till past twelve & consequently the bird was flown before he arrived at the appointed place of rendezvous. In a state of impatience amounting almost to madness he continued to pace the chestnut avenue watching the setting of the moon, the slow vanishing of the stars & the gradual approach of day-light, listening to every breath of wind & transforming the rustle of each falling leaf in ^t the step of his expected fair one. Morning broke however, the sun ^{rose}, the Deer awoke from their light slumbers & still lady Emily came not. Stung to the heart with her apparent infidelity, he determined to learn the cause of it from her own mouth & if a satisfactory excuse were not assigned to bid her an eternal farewell, with this resolution ^{he} hastened to the castle .

on his arrival he found it all in confusion, the servants hurrying to & fro with countenances of doubt & dismay. on inquiring the reason of this unusual movement, he was informed that lady Emily had disappeared that night & that no one knew where she was gone. Terror struck at this intelligence he immediately returned to Verdopolis where he remained for some days during which time the most diligent research was made after the unfortunate lady by her afflicted Uncle but all to no purpose. Finding this to be the case St Clair who had now- lost all motive for desiring a continuance of life & whose bitter & heart-gnawing anguish rendered a quiescent state of existence the most terrible of all others determined immediately to offer his own services & those of the clan whose chieftain he was to the Duke of Wellington in his intended expedition against the Ashantees. this proposal of course was gratefully accepted & St Clair soon after departed to gather his warriors & lead them from their native mountains. With his opportune arrival the reader is already acquainted & now having cleared scores I may trot on unincumbered.

On the evening of the day which followed that event as The Earl sat in his tent with no other companion than the little Page Andrew who squatting like a Turk in one corner was employed in burnishing his master's spear & silver quiver. Colonel Percy rode up on his gallant war- horse & informed St Clair that the Duke was about to hold a council of war in which his presence would be required. It was with difficulty that our hero managed to return a civil answer to the unwelcome envoy, with a haughtiness of gesture & a sternness of tone that ill-suited the courteous nature of the words he replied "that he felt highly flattered by the Duke's request & would attend him without delay" Whether Percy experienced any reciprocation of animosity I know not but his countenance expressed none as with a bland smile & low inclination of the head he touched his horse's sides & caracoled' gaily away.

The council was held in a large tent covered with scarlet cloth richly ornamented with gold embroidery & from the summit waved a crimson flag bearing the arms of England. When St Clair entered this superb pavillion, he found the Duke surrounded by about twenty officersf. at his left hand sat the Marquis of Charlesworth whose pale countenance & abstracted air told a melancholy tale of recent afflic

tion. the Earl was invited by his Grace to take the seat at his right hand which was vacant. at this flattering mark of distinction Colonel Percy who sat near the entrance of the tent amongst the junior officers was observed to smile with a peculiar expression.

"Now Gentlemen" said the Duke when all were assembled "I do not intend to detain you long, my motive for assembling you together was merely to obtain your approbation of a proposal for settling our black friends on the other side of the river in a few hours without I trust incurring much risk to our own army"

His Grace then proceeded to unfold a scheme for attacking the enemy's camp at night when they would be wholly unable to make

any adequate defence it having been ascertained by means of spies that their watch was not one of the most vigilant in the world, the advantages of this plan being obvious the council gave a unanimous opinion in its favour & the next night was assigned as the period for putting it into execution. Business being thus summarily disposed of the Duke proceeded to say "Since Gentlemen I have called you to-gether for an affair of such brevity some reparation is due. I hope therefore you will not refuse to partake with me of a soldier's supper, it is prepared & now only waits your approach"

As he spoke the curtain at the upper end of the tent was withdrawn & revealed an inner pavillion brilliantly lighted in which was a long table covered with the material for an excellent & substantial though not perhaps a luxurious supper. All willingly accepted the invitation except the Marquis of Charlesworth who pleaded an inability to enjoy festivity as an excuse for declining it.

"I will not press you my lord" said the Duke kindly taking his hand but remember that solitude nourishes grief" the old man's only reply was a mournful shake of the head. "That poor fellow has had a heavy stroke in his old age" observed Colonel Percy who happened to be seated next to St Clair at supper he has lost a very pretty & accomplished neice in a most unaccount- "ble manner"

Has he?" said the Earl eyeing his neighbour with a glance that might have struck terror to the heart of a lion.

"Yes" pursued the Colonel in a tone of the most provoking calmness "Ah she was a sweet girl rather capricious though as most women are, one of her fancies was particularly absurd" "What might that be?" asked St Clair.

"Why you'll hardly believe it when I tell you, she took it into her head to fall in love with a poor, silly, sneaking puppy of a painter & for some time declared she would marry him in preference to the nephew & heir of a duke but at length the latter lover prevailed & then the little witch confessed she had only been playing the coquette to try her suitors fidelity & that in reality she despised the man of canvass as much as she did the meanest of his sign-post daubs"

The flush which crimsoned St Clair's cheek & brow & the light which sparkled in his fierce eyes would have quelled the insolence of any ordinary man but they only increased that of the demi fiend who sat by rejoicing in his agony.

"You are not subject to apoplectic fits are you sir?" said he gazing on him with affected wonder.

"No replied the Earl suppressing his wrath by a strong effort "but Sir how will the successful lover bear the loss of his intended bride?"

"Oh, they say he displays a laudable degree of resignation under the affliction"

"Then his affection for her was a pretence?" "No I don't say that but you know my lord he is perhaps better acquainted with her whereabouts than other people. Hum, don't you understand me?" "Indeed I do not"

"Why then to speak more plainly, some folks don't hesitate to say that she has eloped"

"Sir" said the Earl in a low deep voice "Let me tell you I am in some degree acquainted with the parties we have been conversing about & let me tell you further that if I were her uncle & entertained the least suspicion of the kind you hint at I would cause the infernal scoundrel her lover to be torn limb from limb by wild horses or force him to tell me where the unhappy creature is concealed"

"Ha! Would you" said the colonel while a cloud at once fell on his brow & he instinctively grasped the weapon at his side but almost directly after he muttered "the hour is not yet arrived" & his countenance resumed its former state of deceitful composure.

The dishes were now removed & wine was introduced. after the first few rounds the Duke of Wellington rising from his seat at the head of the table "begged to be excused from a longer stay at the festive board". he then drank to the health of all his guests & bidding them good night withdrew. St Clair who was in no mood for joining in the riotous mirth that now became the principal characteristic of the military mess took the first opportunity of following his example.

the night was still & calm, its dewy coolness & the mild moonlight which was poured down upon him at intervals as he wandered among the silent tents & through the dark groves which waved with scarce visible motion along the river's shelving banks served in a great measure to soothe his roused & exaggerated passions. But not all the deep tranquility which fell like balm from the blue starry sky Not all the images of rest & serenity which a sweet summer's night ever creates could bring corresponding peace to his love tortured heart, or expel the worm of jealousy that now gnawed his very vitals. To be despised by her for whom he could have given his life's blood, to be the object of her derision & scorn, to have all his suspicions of her good faith so fearfully verified, was worse than death to his proud haughty spirit. As he stood on the river's brink & looked down on the deep clear waters which flowed so gently & wooingly at his feet he longed to cool the delirium of his brain by a spring into their liquid freshness, putting aside however this suggestion of the tempter & half- despising himself for being so moved by the false-heartedness of a fickle woman he turned from the stream & proceeded towards his own tent. just as he was about to enter it a voice whispered in his ear, Beware of Percy, it is a friend who warns you." The Earl looked hastily round ; he saw a dark figure gliding away which was soon lost in the shadow of a lofty cluster of palm trees.

For a long time after he had laid himself on his deer skin couch that night, Slumber refused to visit his aching eyelids, the warning of his unknown friend, joined to the other subjects of deep & intense thought which filled his distracted mind for some hours effectually nished sleep from his pillow. But at last wearied nature being quite worn out was compelled to seek refuge in temporary repose. Scarcely had kindly oblivion fallen over the sorrows which oppressed him when a long & peculiarly shrill whistle sounded without the tent. Andrew who till this moment had been apparently fast asleep in a corner now softly & cautiously left his couch & taking up a small lamp stopt on tip-toe to his master's bed-side, having ascertained that he was really slumbering by holding the light to his closed eyes &c. the page wrapped himself in a green plaid & without noise left the tent, at the outside a man was standing whose blue coat & livried hat showed him to be the same person that had abducted Andrew about a month since. Without a word spoken both walked or rather stole away towards a neighbouring grove the footman leading the way & beckoning Andrew to follow, here they were joined by another figure in a cloak. All three then proceeded down the river & in a few minutes the intervening trees entirely concealed them from view.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

"Well my lord the day is ours at last, but we've had a hard tug for the victory - upon my word those black rascals fought like devils"

"They did indeed & I think their overthrow considering all the circumstances of the case may be accounted almost a miracle."

"Truly it may. by the bye St Clair I shall hold a second council of war this Evening, those circumstances you allude to require explanation, they must be carefully looked into, you will attend of course?"

"Certainly my lord"

such was the brief dialogue between St Clair & the Duke of Wellington as the latter rode by with his staff. A bloody but decisive victory had just been gained over the Ashantee though in a manner different from what had been at first intended. At eleven o'clock of the night appointed for the secret attack, the Duke of Wellington crossed the Senegal at the head of his whole army. As they drew near the hostile camp not a voice whispered, not a light glimmered among the long silent rows of snow white tents, unopposed they held on their course to Quashie's own pavillion. they entered, it was empty, a short

space of time sufficed to ascertain that not a living thing save themselves remained in all the deserted camp. Those who were near the Duke when this discovery was made said that for a few moments his countenance expressed a depth of disappointment akin to despair, he recovered himself however almost directly & ordered scouts to disperse instantly in every direction & find out which way the enemy was gone. Ere long some of them returned with the information that they had marched northward & were now halting about ten miles off. The army immediately received orders to take the route indicated which led up the valley.

About day break they arrived at a wild mountain pass, through which might be seen a vast plain where the allied forces of the Moors Ashantees & Abyssinians, were all drawn up in battle array. It was a gorgeous but terrific spectacle as the first sunbeams flashed on that dusky host & lighted up to fiercer radiance their bright weapons & all the barbarous magnificence of gold & gems in which most of the warriors were attired, as the Duke's Army with himself at their head filed slowly forward through the narrow gorge, a young horseman sped suddenly to the front of the African array & waving his long lance in the air exclaimed "Freedom would this night have received her death stab from the hand of the White Tyrant had not a traitor arisen in the Camp of Oppression" with these words he plunged again into the ranks & disappeared but not before the golden diadem glittering on his forehead had revealed the arch-rebel Quashie.

The contest which then ensued & which dyed the plains of Camalia with blood I need not describe: it is a matter of History. Suffice it to say that of the twenty-five thousand gallant rebels whom the sun's rising rays had that morning lighted to the contest high in hope & strong in valour the bodies of seventeen thousand eight hundred ere evening lay cold & still on a lost field of battle waiting till the vultures of Gibbel Kumri should scent the banquet from afar & grant them a living sepulchre in their devouring maws.

Our hero St Clair had played one of the most conspicuous parts in the days tragedy. Reckless of Life which was now hateful to him he ought glory at the head of his brave Highlanders wherever the fight raged thickest & almost wished that the renown his dauntless courage was certain to earn might ring through the world whilst he himself lay in the voiceless tomb shrouded in his last garments & hushed to repose in the slumber from which none can awake. Fate however had decreed otherwise, the scymitar of the turbaned moor, the war spear of the savage Ashantee & even the renowned arrow of the quivered Abyssinian seemed all to have lost their powers of destruction when turned against him & when the battle was past & he with his little army slowly retraced their steps over the gory plain, it was with feelings approaching to envy that he viewed the ghastly corpses which pale & mangled lay scattered around.

On arriving at his own tent he called Andrew to assist him in changing his soiled & bloody dress, the page however did not obey this summons & after waiting sometime in expectation of his appearance he was obliged to manage as well as he could without any aid. having completed his toilette & partaken of some refreshment, he hastened as it was now late to attend the council. A profound silence pervaded the pavillion as he entered broken only by an occasional whisper. The Duke was sitting at the head of the table in an unusually pensive & meditative posture, his head resting on his hand, his brows contracted & an expression of deep solemnity diffused over his whole countenance. When St Clair was seated he looked up & glanced quickly round as if to ascertain that all the members were assembled then rising he proceed to address them briefly thus.

"Gentlemen the cause for which you are convened this night is of the last importance, it is to make an enquiry which will involve the life and honnour of some individual or individuals amongst you. Two days ago a plan was broached in this place for attacking our enemies by night: they obtained intelligence of it & it was frustrated. Our business is now to discover how that intelligence reached them. I grieve to say that the words which you all heard the rebel-leader utter this day in the face of both armies have raised the horrible suspicion in my mind that it was by treachery. The traitor must be in this apartment & if he will now confess his guilt I solemnly promise to spare his life, but if he leaves it to be found out by another, then a death the most painful & dishonourable shall be his."

The Duke ceased. his stern & keen eye scrutinized the counten

ances of all who surrounded him one by one as if he would by that means have read the thoughts passing in every heart. For some minutes not a word was spoken; each regarded his neighbour with a visage in which awe, curiosity & aimless suspicion were strangely mingled. The dim torchlight of the pavillion however showed one person whose calm & noble features displayed none of these emotions but on the contrary something like a lurking smile played round the corners of his mouth, it was Colonel Percy, in a short time he rose & advancing to the table where the duke sat said in a low voice "Will your grace permit me to speak?" "Certainly" was the reply.

"Then" continued the Colonel drawing his tall form up to the fullness of its majestic height, & coolly folding his arms "I have it in my power to reveal the wretch who betrayed his general & his comrades but before I mention the craven's name he shall have one more opportunity of saving his worthless life. Conscience stricken Traitor step forward & avail yourself of that mercy which is even now passing away never to return"

a breathless pause followed this awful appeal, not a whisper sounded, not a foot or hand moved.

"You will not accept the offered boon?" said Percy in deep thrilling tones "then your blood be upon your own head, My lord," he went on turning to the Duke while a supernatural light rose in his triumphant glance, "know that the base traitor sits at your right hand, yes the most Noble Ronald, Lord of St Clair, & cheiftain of Clan Albyn, has been bribed by the negro's wealth to blot with treachery a scutcheon owned by a hundred Earls"

One universal exclamation of "impossible" broke forth at this strange accusation. Each member of the council started from his seat & an expression of astonishment amounting almost to horror appeared in every countenance. The Duke & St Clair alone sat unmoved.

"Sir" said the former calmly but somewhat sternly "The most ample proof of this bold charge must be furnished, or that punishment intended for the accused shall recoil upon the accuser"

"I accept your grace's alternative" replied the Colonel bowing low "testimony is not wanting but first let me ask his lordship if he denies the charge"

"No" replied the Earl in a tone of startling vehemence, while he sprung from his seat as if actuated by some overmastering impulse, "No I scorn to deny the hellish falsehood, but I will prove its baseness on that tool of Satan with my sword"

as he spoke he snatched the weapon from its scabbard. "Gentlemen" said Percy wholly undisturbed by this action "that sword condemns him. mark it well & then tell me if such a one ought to be in the hands of a British Soldier."

All eyes turned on the glittering blade, it was a curved Moorish scymitar the handle richly decorated with gems of the highest value.

"that certainly has not been purchased in Verdopolis my lord" said the Duke after examining it. "how did you obtain it?"

"I know not" replied St Clair regarding the weapon with evident surprise "it is not my own - I never saw it till this moment"

"Recollect yourself" continued his friendly Judge. "Did you take it up by mistake on the field of battle?" The Earl shook his head.

"Perhaps" observed Colonel Percy with a sneer "I could inform his lordship how it came into his possession, if your Grace will allow me to produce my witness."

The Duke signified his assent & Percy advancing towards the tent door called out "Travers bring in the prisoner". this summons was answered by the appearance of a footman leading a boy whose keen eye & shrivelled, ill-favoured features instantly proclaimed him to be no other than our friend Andrew.

"How is this?" exclaimed St Clair stepping back in amazement, "Why is that boy in your custody? I claim him as my vassal & as his liege lord have a right to know of what he is accused"

"he shall inform you himself my lord" said the Colonel significantly.

"No" interposed the Duke. "I should like to hear it from you Sir in the first place."

"I found him my lord" returned Percy "beyond the proscribed boundaries of the camp early yesterday morning when I was going m>

rounds as officer of the watch. on questioning him where he had been, he appeared much agitated & returned no answers but such as were inconsistent & evidently false. I then threatened to punish him severely if he did not speak the truth, this had the desired effect, he immediately confessed that he had been to the African Tents, further questions extorted from him the information on which I have grounded my charge against his master & which he is now ready to communicate to your Grace"

"Andrew" said the Duke "come here, will you promise to answer me truly such questions as I shall now ask?"

"I will" said the boy laying his hand on his heart with great apparent sincerity.

"By whom then were you sent to the Ashantee Camp?" "By my lord the Chief." "What for?"

"To deliver a paper which was sealed & directed to Quashie the second King of the liberated Africans" "Had you ever been there before?" "yes once." "When?" "That same night" "& why did you go then?"

"I was sent to ask for a certain reward which Quashie had promised my master some time before in case he would tell him of all that passed in such councils as he should attend" "Did you hear that promise made?" "Yes"

"at What time?"

the first night after we arrived here a black man came to my lord's tent & offered him twelve ackies? (I think he called it) of rock gold if he would do as he wanted him," "And your master consented?"

"Did you see Quashie When you went to his Camp?" "Yes"

"What was he like?"

"He was a young man & very tall, his nose & lips were not flat & thick like the other blacks & he spoke English."

"The description you have given is very correct. now tell me what the reward was you carried to your master."

"There was a black box filled with something very heavy, a large mantle made of different coloured silk & a sword which Quashie took from his own belt" "Describe the sword"

"It was crooked, almost like a sickle & had a great many precious stones about the handle"

here a general murmur of surprise broke from the bystanders. the Duke however sternly rebuked them & went on.

"Do you know where the black box & silk mantle were put?" "Yes my master commanded me to dig a hole in the centre of the tent & bury them there."

"Bobadil" said his Grace, "take one or two men with you to the Earl's tent & see if you can find these articles,"

Bobadil made a deep & silent reverence & departed to execute his commission. General Leaf now advanced to the table.

"May I ask" said he addressing the page in a tone which retained something of the ancient long-drawn twang, "Whether you were by yourself when you went to the Raubels?"

"No My master went part of the way with me the first time" replied Andrew.

"I thought so for the night before last when I was returning from de counshel saupper, I saw a tall man & a little boy going towards the camp boundaries & the man was dressed in a green plaid such as laurd St Clair wears"

"That is conclusive evidence" observed Colonel Percy, "it's corroborative" said the Duke "but I do not allow it to be quite conclusive".

Steps were now heard approaching the door of the pavillion. & in another moment General Bobadil entered bearing a black box in one hand & a folded silk garment in the other. he silently deposited both on the table, the Duke first examined the latter article, it was one of those splendid Ashantee cloths which exhibit in their ever-varying hues all the vivid colours of the rainbow, he then opened the casket & took out its contents which consisted of five double gold chains each two yards long, a collar & a pair of bracelets of the same costly metal, several ornaments in aggrg beads & an amulet in a gold case blazing with the finest diamonds.

"Good God" said he when he had completed the survey "I could not have thought that these paltry trinkets would have purchased a British Soldiers faith. St Clair rise - let me hear your defence. I wish with my whole heart that you may be able to disprove all we have heard this night"

"My lord" said the Earl who had hitherto been sitting motionless with his head muffled in his plaid "I have no defence to make. Heaven knows my innocence, but how can I prove to man that all the seemingly fair & consistent evidence which has just been delivered is in reality a most Satanic compound of the deepest & blackest falsehoods, my destiny is at present dark & gloomy I will wait with patience till a better prospect rises"

So saying he folded his arms & resumed his former attitude, the Duke then proceeded to say that he should not yet pronounce sentence but should give the accused six weeks to collect witnesses & prepare for a formal trial, he informed him likewise that he should be instantly conveyed to Verdopolis & intimated his intention of repairing thither himself as soon as the rebellion should be finally quelled. The council now broke up & St Clair was removed by a band of soldiers to the tent usually appropriated to prisoners.

I must beg the reader to imagine that a space of six weeks has elapsed before he again beholds my hero, during which time he has been removed to Verdopolis & placed in one of those state dungeons that lie under the Tower of All nations. It was a gloomy place, a thousand feet below the upper world, the thick walls & the low roof elevated on short broad arches as massive as the rock whence they were hewn, admitted no sound however faint transient & far away by which the tenant of this living tomb might be reminded that near three millions of his fellow men were living & moving in the free light of heaven above him. The dead the dreary silence which hung in the grave-like atmosphere was however broken at intervals by a noise which low indeed & seemingly as distant as the earth's central abyss yet shook the dungeon's walls & as it reverberated among the other subterranean caverns which were excavated above below & around rung on the ear with a deep hollow boom that chilled the heart & brought the sweat-drops of terror to the brow. This was the clam-clam sounding through underground passages a thousand miles in length from the haunted hills ofjibbel Kumri.

Here on the evening of that day preceding the one appointed for his final trial, St Clair lay stretched on a bed of straw, a glimmering lamp was placed on the damp ground beside him, its feeble rays inadequate to dissipate the almost palpable darkness which shrouded the remote recesses of this fearful prison yet shed a faint dying light on the unfortunate nobleman's wasted person & features. Not a trace remained of that bright bloom which health & youthful vigour had once communicated to his now wan & sunken cheek, the light of his eye however yet remained unquenched; the princely beauty of his countenance though faded was not destroyed.

Suddenly as a harsh, grating sound like a key turning in a rusty lock proclaimed the jailor's approach he started from his recumbent posture & sat upright. It was full ten minutes before all the fastenings which secured the dungeon door were removed, but at length the last bolt was withdrawn & the heavy iron portals being unfolded gave admittance not to the jailor but to a tall man whose form & face were wholly concealed by the foldings of his ample mantle. With a slow & cautious step he advanced toward the Earl's straw couch, & placing himself on that side which was most dimly illuminated by the lamp addressed him thus.

"Earl of St Clair if I mistake not you lie here on the charge of Treachery"

"And if I do" replied the prisoner whose spirit confinement had not in the least subdued "does that circumstance give strangers a right to insult me by the mention of it?"

"Certainly not" returned the unknown visitor unmoved by the indirect reproach which his words conveyed "Nor did I intend to insult you by the question I have just asked, my firm conviction is that you are innocent of the crime laid to your charge - do I err in that belief?"

"Do you err in a belief of your own existence?" "I should think not"

"Be as certain then of the one fact as you are of the other & you will be right. "

"That is decisive" replied the stranger in a tone which revealed that a smile was curling his lip & then after a pause he added "My lord does not your trial for this false offence come on tomorrow?" "it does"

"& are you provided with evidence to disprove it?" "No & I doubt not that before forty eight hours go by I shall have fallen a victim to the hate of a malignant enemy. Yes the last son of the lords of Roslyn will go to his grave branded with the name of traitor" "Not if I can help it!" said the unknown "and I will do my utmost" "Stranger you are kind but what alas is it in your power to effect? the evidence against me is strong, the web of deceit has been woven with impenetrable art."

"Oh but fear nothing. Truth shall prevail at last. tell me only who your concealed enemy is" "Colonel Percy, my accuser"

"I thought as much, & now I come to the object of my visit to you in this loathsome dungeon; why does he hate you?"

"Before I answer that question I must know who it is that asks me" "That cannot be" replied the Stranger drawing his ample cloak more firmly round him. "Thus far however I may say. I am the person who sometime since warned you to beware of Colonel Percy. I was present when the charge was brought against you & as I know something of the accuser's character & disposition I was led to suspect the truth of what he said knowing that nothing but a motive of the most powerful kind could induce him to be so active in an affair of that nature. I ask you to inform me what that motive is if you will be candid with me the young vulture shall miss his prey this time."

"Sir" replied the Earl "there is something in your voice which tells me I ought to trust you. Know then that I loved a woman who as I thought was the most beautiful & excellent of her sex. the Colonel was my rival and -"

"You have said enough" interrupted the stranger "I need no more to convince me fully of your perfect innocence. In such a case I know Colonel Percy would never rest till he had wreaked on his rival the deepest & deadliest revenge were that rival his own brother, the whole black conspiracy is now revealed: he is the traitor & heaven willing he shall die the traitor's death. Tomorrow when you are called upon to produce evidence of your innocence do not hesitate to say that there is one in the court who if he will can prove you guiltless of the crime, leave the rest to me & now farewell I hope to-morrow night you will lay your head on a different pillowf

“Farewell” said St Clair warmly grasping the stranger’s hand “& doubt not my unknown friend that a Roslyn will know how to recompense those who have saved his honour”

with these words the Earl fell back on his lowly pallet, while the stranger hastened to regain the upper Earth which he had quitted to fulfil his benevolent errand.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

The old Hall of Military Justice (it has lately been pulled down and a new one erected in its stead) was a vast & gloomy building, surrounded by Galleries & surmounted by a huge dark dome upheld by massive columns the shadow of whose ponderous shafts united with the louing roof diffused around an air of profound & appropriate solemnity, here on the 25th of September 1814, upward of ten thousand people were assembled to view the trial of the Earl of St Clair for high Treason. The Duke of Wellington occupied the principal seat among the judges who were twelve in number. A degree of intense interest contracted every brow as the noble prisoner loaded with irons & attired in the striking costume of his clan was led by a guard of soldiers into the centre of the hall. None could behold his lofty bearing his majestic form, his youthful & handsome features, & the stately gait with which he moved in spite of his heavy fetters, without experiencing an involuntary conviction that he who stood before them was no traitor.

The first step taken by the court was to demand a recapitulation of the evidence which had already been adduced, this was accordingly gone into: the jewels, the amulet, the cloth, & the sword were all sedulously displayed & it appeared that nothing was wanting to prove the prisoner's guilt in the most satisfactory manner. "He is lost beyond redemption" was the general feeling which prevailed the bosom of every spectator. The Earl was now called upon for his defence, slowly he rose & with a calm dignity of manner proceeded to assert his innocence & deprecate the clemency of his Judges.

"My Lords" said he rising in energy as he went on "I do not implore an acquittal, that would be the part of a man who conscious of guilt seeks mercy as a boon. no I claim it, it is my right, I am innocent & I demand to be treated as such, I conjure you to do your duty, believe the word of a nobleman whose honour till now was never doubted & reject that of a - what shall I call him - of a man who to speak in mild terms is well known utterly to disregard both truth & honour when injuries either real or supposed awake in his bosom the blood-thirsty passion of revenge. And my lords for the other witness" (here he turned his full dark eyes on the perjured page who shrunk as if blighted by his glance) "I know not what demon has possessed my vassal's breast what hell-born eloquence has persuaded the orphan who since his birth has existed only on my bounty, to aid in the destruction of his lord & benefactor, but this I know they who shall condemn me for such cursed testimony will sin both in the eyes of men & angels. My lords avoid the sin for the sake of that Justice whose servants you profess to be & whose image stands there the Guardian of your hall." (every eye turned as he spoke to the colossal statue of Justice which stood conspicuous in the light of the lofty window. meantime the Earl continued) "My lords avoid it for your own sake for I warn you the last St Clair will not die unavenged. There are on the heights of my own Elimbos ten thousand unconquered warriors, seven times that number fierce as lions & free as the Eagles that furnish their crests dwell in the bosoms of those hundred glens that ruled by no sovereign controlled by no laws lie among the wild Branni Hills. And when the news that I am dead that the house of their chief is fallen, that his name & fame are blasted shall reach these wild sons of the mist, let my ^{fers} "ho cut me off with the sword & under the mask of Justice tremble in their high places. My lords I will say no more, do as you list & gather the fruit of your deed."

The question was now put whether he had any witnesses to call. For a moment he was silent & seemed lost in deep thought but almost immediately raising his head he said in a firm tone "I believe there is one in this hall who if he will can do me great service." there was a pause, the Judges (except the Duke who throughout the trial had preserved his usual imperturbable calmness of demeanour) regarded each other with looks of astonishment. The exulting smile which had begun to dawn on Colonel Percy's cheek vanished, the page turned pale, & St Clair's own countenance assumed an expression of anxious expectation, at length a slight bustle was heard in one part of the hall, a movement became perceivable among the dense & hitherto almost motionless mass of spectators, their close ranks slowly opened & a young man of handsome & genteel appearance attired in an officer's undress uniform, advanced to the Judges' seats.

"Are you come to bear testimony in favour of the prisoner?" asked the Duke of Wellingtonf.

"I am" replied the young officer bowing respectfully to his interrogator.

"what is your name & profession?"

"My name is John Bud & I hold the rank of Ensign in the Sixty-fifth regiment of horse commanded by Colonel Percy"

"Repeat what you know concerning this affair but first let the oath be administered to him."

this formula being complied with Ensign Bud proceeded to give evidence to the following effect. That on the night preceding that on which the army received orders to attack the enemies camp, he was returning to his own tent after passing the evening with a friend, when just as he passed the outskirts of a thick grove of trees, beside the river, the words "thou shalt obey me this instant Dwarf or I'll stab thee to the heart" caught his ear, that on looking through the branches he beheld Colonel Percy & a man dressed in livery holding between them a little boy whom he believed to be the same now present in their lordships' court, that the child fell on his knees & promised to obey them in every-thing, That the Colonel then told him to go to the African Camp & claim a reward in the name of his master the Earl of St Clair for intelligence of an important nature concerning certain plans which had just been resolved on in a council of war, that on the boy's declaring he did not know the way the Colonel said he would go with him as far as the boundaries, that then after wrapping himself in a green plaid which he took from the child, all three left the place & were soon out of sight. As the witness concluded this singular piece of evidence, Colonel Percy started from his seat & sprung rather than stepped to the bar.

"My lords" he exclaimed in a loud but agitated voice which while his flushed cheek, fierce eye & the veins swelled almost to bursting on his forehead proclaimed the violence of the emotions that were contending within him "my lords I implore you not to believe a word which has been uttered by that forsworn that perjured minion, mean revenge has dictated -" he was going on with increasing vehemence when the Duke of Wellington commanded silence.

A short conference carried on in such low tones as scarcely to be audible then succeeded among the judges the result of which was

that they declared that Ensign Bud's testimony was not sufficiently clear & decisive to warrant an immediate acquittal but that they should remand the prisoner for the present in order that he might have an opportunity of procuring additional evidence. The court was now about to dissolve when a movement became again visible among the crowd, it opened a second time & our friend Mr Sdeath appeared followed by six men bearing a litter on which lay a man dressed in the blue silver laced coat of a foot man. His countenance was ghastly pale & his clothes were covered with recent stains of blood. "Set him down here at the foot of his master as in duty bound" said Mr Sdeath, coming forward with an air of bustling assiduity, & carefully assisting the men to deposit their doleful burden just beside Colonel Percy.

"What do you mean by this you villain?" asked he turning as pale as the dying man before him. Sdeath answered this question by a quiet inward chuckle & a significant nod of intelligence, then turning to the Duke he said "You see my lord I was daunting' out this morning up the valley to get a breath of country air when just as I got to a very lonely & quiet spot I heard a long rattling groan like as it might be of a man that's either drunk or discontented, so I turned to the place it seemed to come from & what should I see but this here carrion lying writhing on the ground like a trodden snake. "What's to do with you?" says I "& who's brought you to that smart pass my beauty?" "Colonel Percy" he squealed out "Oh carry me to Verdopolis carry me to the hall of Justice ; let me be revenged on the wretch before I die" There was no resisting this pathetic appeal, besides I have a great affection for the Colonel & knowing him to be a wildish young man (youth alas! has its follies as well as old age) I thought the sight of his poor servant in the dead throws might do him good, so I ran hired a litter & brought him here according to his wish"

"What is the meaning of all this?" asked the Duke "Who is the wounded man?"

"I am a miserable & deluded being" replied Travers in a hollow tremulous tone "but if it please heaven to grant me strength & time for confession I will ease my conscience of a part at least of that fiery burden which presses on it. Let it be known to all in this place that the Earl of St Clair is totally innocent of the crime laid to his charge. My master is the traitor, yes - but - but I cannot get on," here he paused from exhaustion his eyes closed his breath came thick & to all present it appeared as if he were dying. on a glass of wine being administered to him however he revived in some degree, raising himself in his litter he requested to speak with St Clair in Private. Orders were immediately given for the crowd to be cleared out, the subordinate Judges likewise removed to a distant part of the hall & none remained within hearing of his confession except the Duke of Wellington, Ensign Bud & the Earl himself, this being done the poor wretch proceeded thus.

"My lord Colonel Percy hates you for what reasons you yourself best know, he recognized you for an old enemy at the Olympic Games & ordered me after the Prizes were distributed to watch your motions & inform him where you should take up quarters for the night. I dogged you as far as the Zephyr Valley & then returned to tell my master. When we returned you were fast asleep, & that boy whom from his dress short stature & withered unnatural features my master always called the Green Dwarf was laid at your feet, the Colonel then bade me go & fetch the boy to him. I did so & when he was brought, Percy drew his sword & threatened to kill him on the spot if he would not instantly swear to obey him in every thing he should command, the lad called out that if he did obey him it should be for the promise of a reward rather than for a threat of punishment, my master told him to name his own reward; he said he would do so when he knew what his business was to be. Colonel Percy told him in the first place it was to tell him who his master was. he said he would do that for five pounds & then confessed directly that you were the Earl of St Clair, afterwards the Colonel told him that he was to be a spy on all your actions, to note particularly whether you went to Charlesworth Castle" to follow you thither, if possible to listen at the door of the apartment to which you might be shown & to report everything that was said to him. The little mercenary wretch swore to do all this for a hundred pounds. He was then informed in what part of the city his employer resided, & dismissed to commence his villainous system of espial. About a week afterwards he arrived at our house panting & quite out of breath & desired to see the Colonel instantly, he had brought information that you & lady Emily Charlesworth had concerted a plan of elopement together which was to be put in practice at twelve o'clock that night, my master commanded him to delay you as much beyond the time as he could & then dismissed him. At eleven o'clock he & myself set off in a carriage & six for the castle, we reached the place of rendezvous a chestnut avenue shortly after twelve, at the entrance my master got out & went a little way up the walk, he soon returned with the lady & handed her into the carriage"

"Did she go with him willingly?" asked St Clair in a tone of the deepest agitationf.

"yes but it was because he had passed himself for you, & as he had on a travelling cloak & the trees threw a very dark shade it was impossible for her to discover the cheat."

"But she might have recognized his voice, he spoke to her did he not?"

"Very seldom & when he did it was scarcely above his breath"

"Well proceed : where did you carry her?"

"That I cannot, dare not tell. I am bound by a solemn oath never to reveal it & surely you would not have me add fresh agonies to my dying hour by committing the crime of perjury?"

In this determination the man seemed fixed. St Clair tried in vain arguments, entreaties & commands & seeing it was impossible to prevail with him & that the sands of life were running very low, he at length permitted him to continue his confession.

"When she was secured" said he "We returned to Verdopolis & the next day accompanied the rest of the army on their march against the rebels, you arrived at the camp shortly after us. as soon as he saw you my master resolved to rid himself of an abhorred rival in your person & was confirmed in this resolution by seeing the distinction with which his Grace the Duke of Wellington treated you. accordingly one night he ordered me to fetch him the Green Dwarf. I proceeded to your tent for this purpose & by means of a peculiar signal with which he was acquainted called him out. Subsequently by means of threats & promises the Dwarf was induced to lend his aid in executing the scheme which my master had devised for your disgrace & death, he went to the camp, betrayed the secrets of the council in your name & brought back as a recompense the articles which are now lying on that table, these he afterwards buried in your tent, he removed the sword which was fastened to your belt & put that scymitar in its place, & finally he completed his treachery by delivering that false evidence which has so nearly been the means of causing you to incur an undeserved & shameful death"

here Travers paused again to wipe off the death-sweats which were starting in large drops from his pallid forehead.

"you have nobly cleared St Clair's character" said the Duke of Wellington "now inform us by whom & how the wound of which you are dying has been inflicted"

"By my master," replied the unhappy man "I informed him this morning as we were returning from his Uncle's country seat in the valley that I intended to reform & lead a better life, for that the sins I had already committed lay like a leaden weight at my heart. At first he laughed at me & pretended to think I was in jest, but on my assuring him that I never was more serious in my life, he grew gloomy, we walked together for some time in silence, but at length just as we came to a very lonely part of the road he drew his sword & stabbed me suddenly in the side saying as I fell, with a loud laugh "now go & reform in Hell" I can speak no longer & you know the rest"

The last part of Traver's communication was uttered in a very faint & broken voice, when the excitement of talking was past he fell into a sort of lethargy which continued about ten minutes & then with a single gasping groan & convulsive shudder of the whole frame his soul & body parted for ever asunder.

The Crowd were now again admitted into the hall, the judges returned to their station & the Duke of Wellington after publicly declaring that St Clair's honour was unblemished & that the charge brought against him had risen entirely from the machinations of a malignant enemy, ordered his fetters to be taken off & commanded them to be fastened on the limbs of Colonel Percy & the Green Dwarf instead, subsequently he condemned the former of these worthy personages to Death & the latter to ten years labour at the galleys.

Matters being thus settled the Duke rose from his seat & taking St Clair by the hand he said "my lord I claim you as my guest whilst you remain in Verdopolis, you must comply with my request were it only to show that you bear no malice against me for the six weeks imprisonment to which you have been subjected."

Of course St Clair could not resist an invitation thus courteously urged & accordingly he accompanied the Duke to Waterloo Palace. On his way thither he informed his noble conductor of the mysterious incognito who had visited him in his dungeon & expressed a strong desire to discover who he was that he might recompense him accordingly to the signal service he had received at his hands. "Was it Ensign Bud do you think?" said the Duke. "no" replied St Clair "he was taller & the tones of his voice were very different. indeed if I may be permitted to form so presumptuous a conjecture on such slight grounds, I should say that I am at this moment conversing with my unknown friend" he Duke smiled but returned no answer.

"I am not mistaken then" continued St Clair eagerly "& it is to your Grace that I owe a continuance both of life & honour" as he spoke the silent gratitude which beamed forth from his fine eyes expressed his thanks more clearly than any words could have done. "Well" said the Duke "I will confess that you have made a true guess, & now I suppose you would like to know the reasons which led me in the first place to give you that warning on the banks of the Senegal. It was simply this. I had witnessed the sort of quarrel which took place between you & Colonel Percy during supper in my pavilion. I saw him lay his hand on his sword & then relinquish it with a look & a muttered exclamation which told me plainly that the gratification of present revenge was postponed only for some more delicious future prospect & as the life of the chieftain of Clan-Albyn was of some value in my estimation I determined at least to set him on his guard against the attempts of an insidious enemy. Then for my visit in the prison that was prompted by the information Ensign Bud had communicated to me & I thought that that method of summoning him to give evidence which I pointed out would make a deeper impression on the minds of the other judges than if the ordinary way of calling a witness were followed."

As the Duke concluded this explanation they reached Waterloo Palace. They immediately proceeded to the dining-room where dinner was already prepared. During this meal St Clair spoke very little & eat less, his spirits which had been in some degree excited by the unexpected events of the morning now began to flag. The thought of lady Emily & of the forlorn & wretched condition to which she was probably reduced communicated a mournful gloom to his mind. The Duke perceived this & after a few vain attempts to dispel it he said, "I see what you are thinking of my lord so come I'll carry you to my wife. perhaps her sympathy will be some consolation to your distress" St Clair followed almost mechanically as his noble host led the way to the drawing room. On entering they found the Duchess seated on the sofa & engaged in some ornamental labour of the needle, beside her was a little Indian stand supporting her work-box & a few books, near this & with her back turned to the door was seated another elegant female form over whose rich brown tresses was thrown a transparent veil of white gauze according to the graceful fashion of the times, her head was resting on her hand in a pensive posture & when the Duke & his guest were announced she did not rise nor give any other symptom of being conscious of their presence except a sudden & convulsive start, the Duchess however left her seat & advanced to meet St Clair with a benignant smile.

"I was sure" said she "that Justice would be done & that your fame would come out of the fiery ordeal seven times purified, now my lord will you permit me to introduce you to a friend of mine, here love (addressing the silent lady) "is one whom Fortune has severely tried & who now expects from her & you a recompense for all he has suffered."

the lady rose, threw back her veil, there was a momentary pause, a joyful exclamation & St Clair clasped to his bosom his dear & long-lost Emily, it now only remains for me to explain how this happy catastrophe was brought about which duty I shall discharge as briefly as possible.

During a period of four weeks lady Emily had pined in her lonely prison under the surveillance of the wretched Bertha who regularly visited her three times a day to supply her with food but at all other times remained in a distant part of the castle. at the usual hour on the first day of the fifth week she did not make her appearance, lady Emily whose appetite was much impaired by grief & confinement at first was rather pleased than otherwise with the omission. but when night came she began to feel some symptoms of hunger. the next day likewise elapsed & neither food nor drink passed her now parched & quivering lips. On the morning of the third day she was reduced to such a state of weakness from inanition that she felt totally unable to leave her bed, while she lay there expecting death & almost wishing for it The tramp of a heavy step in the antichamber & the sound of a gruff voice calling out "Is there any living body besides owls & bats in this here old ancient heap of a ruin?", roused her from the lethargic stupor into which she had fallen. Collecting her remaining strength with a strong effort she answered that there was an unhappy woman imprisoned here who would give much for deliverance & a restoration to her friends.

apparently the querist heard her voice faint as it was for he immediately broke open the door of her chamber & appeared in the

shape of a tall & athletic man dressed in the usual garb of rare lads & armed with a long fowling peice. "What's to do with you poor heart that you look so pale & thin?" said he advancing towards her. she shortly informed him that she had eaten nothing for three days & begged a little food for the love of heaven, he directly took from a pouch which was slung over his shoulders a little bread & cheese. While she was eating these coarse though acceptable viands he told her that his name was Dick Crack- Skull & that while poaching a bit in the forest he had lit upon this old Tower which from motives of idle curiosity he had entered through one of the unglazed windows, that in his perambulations through the desolate halls he had to his horror stumbled on the corpse of an old & hideous woman who to his mind looked for all the world like a witch; that he then supposed that there must be some other inhabitants & so had gone on bawling as he went till he reached the antichamber of lady Emily's appartment whose life he had thus been the providential means of saving.

The next day after covering Bertha's dead body with a heap of stones Dick set out with his charge for Verdopolis. on arriving there he accompanied the lady at her own desire to Waterloo Palace. here she put herself under the Duchess's protection who after bestowing on Dick a reward that made his heart leap for joy dismissed him with all honour, from my mother the unfortunate damsel received the most tender & assiduous Kindness insomuch that she won her entire confidence & all the tale of Lady Emily's mournful loves was poured into her beloved patronesse's sympathizing ear. When the news of lord St Clair's incarceration for high treason arrived her grief may be better imagined than described, But now the pleasure of this happy meeting when she received her lover with life untouched & honour unsullied more than counterbalanced all her past tears & agony. The good old Marquis of Charlesworth was now easily brought to consent to their union & according to all accounts never was felicity so lasting & unbroken as that which crowned the future lives of the noble Earl of St Clair & the beautiful Lady Emily Charlesworth.

Having thus wound up the denouement of my brief & jejeune narrative I will conclude by a glance at the future fortunes of Colonel Percy & his accomplice. The Sentence of Death which had been passed on the former was afterwards commuted to exile for sixteen years, during this period he wandered through the world sometimes a Pirate, sometimes a leader of Banditti & ever the companion of the most dissolute & profligate of mankind. At the expiration of the term of banishment, he returned to Verdopolis, broken both in health & fortune to claim the inheritance of his uncle the Duke of Beaufort who had been for some time dead, on enquiry however he found that that Nobleman had married shortly after his disgrace became known & had become the father of two sons on whom consequently his estates & title devolved, thus baffled the Colonel turned his attention to political affairs &, finding himself disowned by all his relations discarded his real name & assumed a feigned one. Few now can recognize in that seditious demagogue that worn out & faded debauchee Alexander Rogue Viscount Ellrington, the once brilliant & handsome young soldier Colonel Augustus Percy.' as for Andrew when he was released from his service on the galleys he became a printer's devil, from thence he rose to the office of compositor & being of a saving & pilfering disposition he at length by some means acquired money enough to purchase a commission in the army, he then took to the trade of author published drivelling rhymes which he called Poetry & snivelling tales which went under the denomination of novels. I need say no more, many are yet living who can discover a passage in the early life of Captain Tree in this my Tale of the Green Dwarf.

Charlotte Bronte September 2nd 1833

Finis